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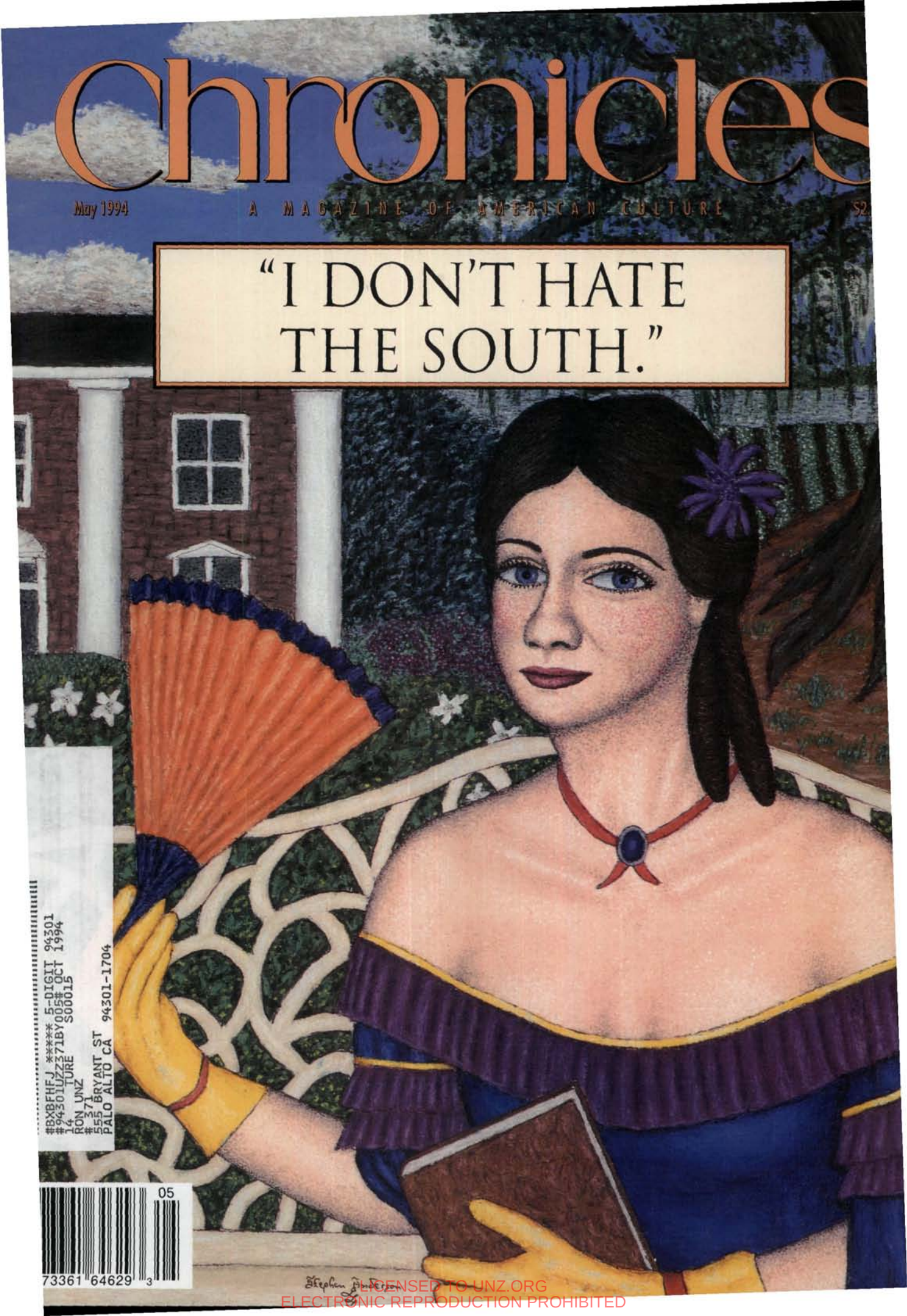

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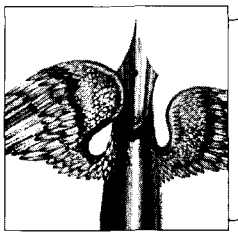

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On Crime and Vigilantism

Like Roger McGrath ("Treat Them to a Good Dose of Lead," January 1994), I "grew up in a Los Angeles that had very little crime." We, too, "locked the door to our house with a skeleton key, when we remembered"—until we lost the key.

Professor McGrath does not attempt to account for the absence of crime in Los Angeles between the wars. Nor, beyond brief references to "badly deteriorated [morale] on the LAPD" and a national "malaise . . . weakening . . . the personal and national will," does he attempt to account for the present crisis. His prescription for confronting that crisis, however, is clear—the armed citizenry and vigilantism that, he argues, kept 19th-century Aurora, Nevada, and Bodie, California, crime-free. That a solution to the crime problem in late 20th-century Los Angeles can be found in 19th-century mining camps is unlikely (a more promising place to seek such a solution is inter-bellum Los Angeles), and that the solution when found will be an armed citizenry and vigilantism is less likely still.

The Los Angeles that I grew up in was a city without an armed citizenry; it was not, however, a city without vigilantes. But one would never say of Los Angeles vigilantes, as Professor McGrath does of those of Aurora and Bodie, that they "displayed military-like organization and discipline and proceeded in a quiet, orderly, and deliberate fashion." Los Angeles vigilantes were ill-organized, *ad hoc* gangs that proceeded in a criminally violent fashion to break strikes and disrupt other lawful union activities. From the orange groves of Covina to the docks of San Pedro, vigilantes employed kidnapping, beating, "the Mussolini treatment," and tar-and-feathering—as frequently against women and children as against adult males—to "deport" and otherwise terrorize "foreigners," "radicals," and "outside agitators." This vigilante criminal violence, sufficiently extreme to precipitate the formation of the Southern California Branch of the ACLU, went unprosecuted by the authorities and unprotested—indeed, it was applauded—by the media. Simply put, in light of this heritage, a return to vigilantism in Los Angeles is unthinkable.

In a xenophobic parting shot that one cannot but suspect reveals much of the basis of his unease with current developments in Los Angeles, Professor McGrath asserts that "we" are failing to defend not just "our persons, our homes" but also "our culture, our borders, our language"; "we hand the barbarians the keys to the gates." In New Mexico during the last half millennium and more, "we" have been the object of a series of *entradas* by successive waves of newcomers. Each wave in turn quickly proclaimed itself "we" and sought—albeit, unsuccessfully—to repel the next wave of "barbarians." Today, New Mexican culture is richer for their failure.

Currently, "we"—Pueblo, Athabascan (Apache and Diné), Hispanic, and Anglo (in New Mexico, "Anglo" may still embrace black)—are under invasion by a new wave of "barbarians"—Angelenos. Though much tempted, "we" have not yet "treated them to a good dose of lead"; rather, like the city from which they flee, "we hand the barbarians the keys to the gates"—trusting, improbable though it now seems, that Angelenos, too, will in time enrich our lives.

For clues as to what to do—and what not to do—in order to recreate a crime-free city, Los Angeles must look not to 19th-century mining camps but to its own recent past and especially to the longer past of New Mexico.

—Nelson Van Valen
Belen, NM

Professor McGrath Replies:

Nelson Van Valen spends most of his time with issues I did not discuss or mentioned only tangentially, and he entirely misunderstands my "barbarian" reference. First, he criticizes me for writing an article about when I grew up in Los Angeles instead of when he did. I could have made the very same points by comparing crime in Los Angeles in 1932 (instead of 1952) with that in 1992, but that's not the article I wrote. Mr. Van Valen claims that the inter-bellum Los Angeles he knew was "a city without an armed citizenry." Really? I would cer-

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tainly like to see him document such a claim. Just a brief survey of the gun clubs and hunting clubs that existed in the 20's and 30's would suggest that the citizenry was well armed. Until a law was finally passed prohibiting it, one of the favorite pastimes of Angelenos was shooting jackrabbits from the rear platform of the passenger cars (the "big red cars") of the Pacific Electric Railway. Quail and dove were shot in fields in West Los Angeles. Before I was born my older brother and an uncle hunted deer in the canyon behind our house. Bear and mountain lion were occasionally taken, too.

Nearly every household in our neighborhood in those days (and still in my day) had a shotgun, a .30-06 and a .22. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the Army had trouble getting enough soldiers to guard the ports, harbors, and beaches of Southern California against an anticipated attack. My brother recalls all of the men in the neighborhood taking turns patrolling the nearby cliffs overlooking the Pacific. With their bolt action aught sixes they were ready to give the Japanese imperial navy what for! (Actually, considering what a few Marines and construction workers did in defense of Wake Island, our cliff-top militia just might have made the Japanese pay a dear price for an invasion.)

Second, Mr. Van Valen refers to "ill-organized, *ad hoc* gangs that proceeded in a criminally violent fashion to break strikes and disrupt other lawful union activities" as vigilantes. They sound more like hired thugs to me. Certainly such actions have nothing in common with the vigilantes of Aurora and Bodie or of most other mining camps. Mr. Van Valen has confused lynch mobs and hired thugs with frontier vigilantism.

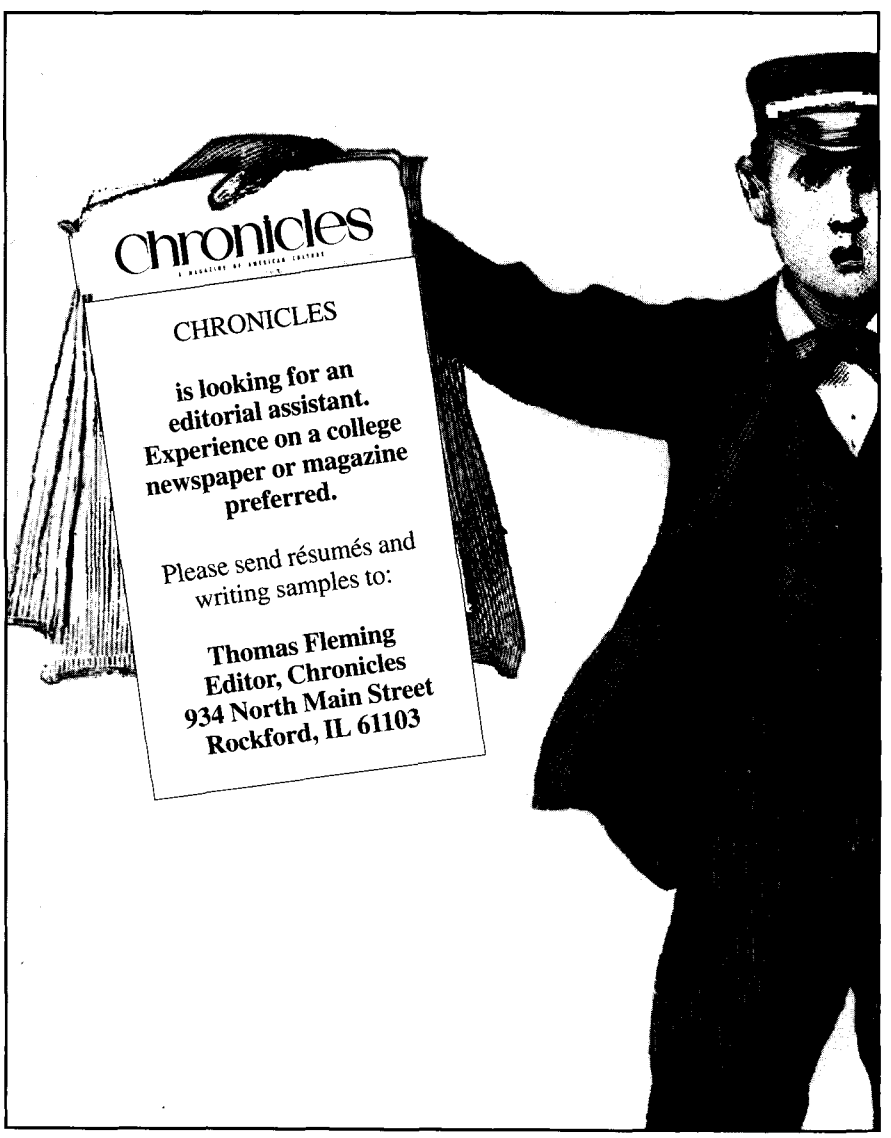
A careful analysis of the committees of vigilance of the Old West suggests that the great majority were, in the words of historian Richard Maxwell Brown, "socially constructive movements"; the majority of townsfolk either participated in the movement or approved of it; the vigilantes were well regulated; they dealt quickly and effectively with a specific criminal problem; they left the town in a stable and orderly condition; they disbanded before substantial opposition developed.

Moreover, a typical committee of vigilance formed an executive committee, adopted a constitution, organized itself into companies and squads, and had a chain of command. Although impassioned and violent, vigilantes were usually highly disciplined, orderly, and deliberate. This was not accidental. Many of them had military experience and some were combat veterans, having served in the Mexican War, the Civil War, or one or more of the Indian wars.

Vigilantes regularly gave those suspected of wrongdoing some kind of trial, and not all tried were found guilty and executed. Of 90 men taken into custody by the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851, 41 were exonerated and released, 15 were remanded to the established authorities, one was whipped, and 28 were banished. Only four were executed.

Finally, Mr. Van Valen's closing remarks indicate that he has missed the entire point of my article. The barbarians I refer to are not illegal immigrants but the homegrown variety: good old native-born American criminals. I merely mentioned in passing that we, as a people, as a society, as individuals, not only do not do much to defend our persons or property but also do little to defend our culture, borders, and language. Further, Mr. Van Valen calls me "xenophobic" for having mentioned it. Expecting a sovereign nation to control its own borders and regulate immigration does not mean one "hates foreigners." Illegal immigration is a topic for another article, I'm afraid, but I might note that it costs the city and county of Los Angeles and the state of California billions of dollars a year and has made English a second language in most of the public elementary schools of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

It really comes down to a very simple law of nature: an organism that does not defend itself, dies.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THE SPYING OF CIA operative Aldrich Hazen Ames and his wife Maria del Rosario Casas Ames—who have been accused by the FBI of working for the Soviets and later the Russians—is significant for reasons that have escaped the Establishment press. Republican Senator Dole and Democratic Senator DeConcini and many others should think twice before denouncing the manifest incompetence of a federal agency, the gross treachery of Mr. and Mrs. Ames against the nation, or the regressive deceptions practiced by a "new" Russia.

Never mind that the CIA let Ames sell his country down the river for nearly a decade, as he betrayed numerous Soviet "assets" to their death. During this same period, the CIA missed the breakup of the Soviet Union and the attempted coup against Yeltsin. Whatever the mission of the CIA is, providing intelligence is not it. For that, we have CNN, which was how the White House found out about Russia's involvement in the Bosnia mess. Boris wouldn't answer the phone.

Never mind that the SVRR (formerly the KGB) runs spy networks in our country, even penetrating our counterintelligence. Since our "assets" in Russia were paid to betray their country, what grounds do we have for complaint? We paid the Soviet double agents, paid Ames to control them, paid his salary while he betrayed them, and helped fund Russia as its government paid him some more—but this is not a new situation.

Since the American people have so often been told about the benignity of Boris Yeltsin and the Russian yearning for McDonald's, Pepsi, and Michael Jackson, an unpleasant and inappropriate reaction would be extreme and irresponsible. President Clinton and Robert Strauss and others have already sagely called for a steady course, continuing to provide foreign governments with money that is then used to subvert the American people who provided the funds. The American government and the Russian government have the same policy, proving that they have more in common with each other than they do with the constituencies they affect to represent and serve. Don't rock the boat.

America's foreign policy is foreign in more than one sense; indeed, its domestic policy is foreign as well. It's rather confusing to impute treachery to a man whose job it was to supervise the treacheries of others. Besides, what country did Ames betray? Since we have porous borders, it's hard to say who is a citizen and who is not, and therefore hard to say that the United States is literally a nation. The GATT and NAFTA agreements indicate that the government regards foreign lobbyists and not the American people as its constituency. Why should we withhold from hostile nations what we grant to rootless and exploitative corporations?

The American government has long known better than the people upon whom it battens. Franklin D. Roosevelt, for instance, knew quite well that the "Man Called Intrepid," William Stephenson, was spying on America Firsters before Pearl Harbor. That President had no problem with foreign agents—British ones, in this case—interfering in his country. Maybe that was because he knew he would later betray Britain.

One unfortunate by-product of the Ames case—as Wolf Blitzer has implied—has been to derail the ponderous movement to pardon Jonathan Jay Pollard, the Navy intelligence analyst who was sentenced to life in prison in 1987 for passing secrets to Israel, is most distressing. The Clinton administration had recently floated balloons about a pardon for Pollard, fulfilling a commitment made during the 1992 campaign. The Israeli head of state, furnishing a new definition of *chutzpah*, actually wrote to Clinton asking for such a pardon, and there have been well-publicized American petitions seeking such a pardon. After all, the country Pollard sold secrets to is our ally, so what's the problem? Don't we want Israel to know what it needs to know? Of course, the Israeli spy network in the United States is second only to Russia's in size and seriousness, and that is not surprising, since both of them have been subvented by American money. One hand washes the other. Seymour Hersh convincingly argues that some of the material Pollard showed to Israel was then passed by Israel to the Soviets. You might say that Ames, by dealing directly with Russia, only cut out the middleman. Since Ames is accused of doing something similar, and since calls for Pollard's pardon have already been floated by the government that he betrayed as well as by the government that recruited him and lied about it, I don't think it's too early to call for a pardon of Ames—and his spouse. After all, no one wishes to hear nasty taunts like "Who does Russia think she is— Israel?" Actually, a Russian diplomat said something similar on CNN: If Israel could do it, why couldn't Russia? Aren't we all allies now?

Of course we are. That's why my forthright and preemptive call for a pardon of the Ameses will be supported nationally. It wouldn't do to single out the Ameses for punishment while pardoning Pollard. Pardoning the Ameses would establish a sure basis for pardoning Pollard, which is obviously a national as well as international priority, though not one that President Clinton is in a position to act on—yet. Anyway, why withhold aid from Russia for spying on us with our own money, when we've opened the national coffers to Israel for doing the same? The only fair thing—fair to Russia, fair to Israel, fair to Pollard, and fair to Mr. and Mrs. Ames—is to pardon everybody and then to pretend that nothing ever happened. That way there will be no embarrassment, and the money to finance more extractions of intelligence from our country will continue to flow to Russia and Israel. That way we can give up the exhausting pretense that the United States has a national interest or that, if we do, the government knows what it is. And that way Russia and Israel will have as much money and even more intelligence than we do (as if that were not already demonstrated), thus relaxing international tensions.

A pardon for Ms. Ames will even rob the horde of feminist commentators of their fodder, since Lorena Bobbitt has already proved that a Latin woman can't be convicted of anything if she cries on the witness stand. A pardon for both she and her husband will also show that if greed justifies the betrayal of the nation by corporate lobbyists, then the franchise can be extended. Finally, a pardon for Ames will assure at least one person that Rick Ames is not lonely.

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Doesn't *every* traitor need and deserve an organized constituency trying to get him out of jail?

—*J.O. Tate*

CLINTON-BASHING is a tempting sport, as indicated by the phenomenal popularity of Rush Limbaugh. But like everything that is too easy, it has its pitfalls. It will be a fruitless enterprise if it merely succeeds in tearing down Clinton to make way for a lackluster Republican administration only marginally better on the critical issues.

Clinton's band of lowlifes does provide a good target—his awful wife, his zoo of appointees (Trachtenberg, Shalala, Elders, Bentsen, Christopher, *ad infinitum*). Yet these indicate not so much the evil of Clinton or of the Democratic Party as what American society and the American political system have become. The Republican Party, after all, gave us Justices Brennan, Blackmun, Thomas, and Souter; "Condom" Koop; Packwood; Frohnmeyer; proscription of serious Christians from policy-making; double prosecution of the L.A. cops; NAFTA; Somalia; and "no new taxes." The distinction is nothing to get excited about.

Despite his public and private shortcomings, it is not apparent to me that Clinton is of a quality significantly below the general level of American leadership. He is more intelligent than any Republican of recent history except Nixon. There is no reason to believe he is less sincere or competent or more prone to lust and greed than many other politicians.

My friend Murray Rothbard has complained that Clinton is "an Arkansas peckerwood in the White House." Would that it were so. That would be cause for rejoicing. But he is not: he is a typical Southern liberal—i.e., a horrible opportunist but also generally less dangerous than a real liberal. It is a peculiar feature of the mainstream American public consciousness that an evil and bumbling Southerner seems even more evil and bumbling than his mainstream counterpart. Thus Clinton, like Carter, makes an easy target for demagoguery. Even more peculiarly, reflecting the ambiguity and love-hate with which the South has always been regarded, a Southerner also seems more decent, which made it possible for Carter and Clinton to be elected when a real liberal could not.

I have never been able to get exercised about the harm Clinton could do. More opportunist than George Bush? Dumber than Jack Kemp? Meaner than Bill Bennett? Clinton seems to have a core of authenticity, measured by the fact that he has made no effort to change his native accent (unlike Albert Gore, Jr., who is a museum-quality specimen of the Southern rich boy who went away to prep school in the East and came back sounding and acting like a complete phony).

I have always thought that given Clinton's naturally cautious and compromising style, and his election as a minority candidate (something he owes entirely to Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot and not to the Republican Party), he would not be able to accomplish anything very significant—despite his execrable company and symbolism—and would therefore be less dangerous than an effective George Bush.

At least the Democrats, unlike the Republicans, actually try to represent their constituency, which is what they are supposed to do in a democracy. This seems to me a moral advantage over the Republican Party, which has been repeatedly elected to represent the middle class, limited government, and traditional values, to none of which it has any honest commitment. It has basically perpetrated a fraud, thus promoting a cynicism and despair among decent Americans that is much more destructive than any watered-down socialist schemes Clinton may be able to get through.

The Republican Party is not and never has been able to meet a challenge such as our times present. The best it can do is call out Dan Quayle to defend the family and promote semisocialist schemes of "empowerment." Conceived in greed, hypocrisy, and fanaticism, the Republican Party has never performed any positive role, except tacitly. It serves two functions in the American body politic: defending the interests of American business, which it does incompetently (in regard to legitimate small business, though competently with respect to the illegitimate demands of big business), and ratifying and consolidating previous Democratic programs (thus, the Kemp-Bennett empowerment program provides a final prop and validation for Lyndon Johnson's failed Great Society). There are a number of good young Republicans in Congress. But, witness my point, it has been the young New Democrats who have taken the effective lead on budget reduction, anti-NAFTA, and immigration control—a lead that Republicans by their nature are incapable of taking.

If we care for the fate of our dispirited and decaying Republic, if we want to mobilize the good qualities of the American character and not just reap temporary benefit from the natural public revulsion to Clintonism, then our first order of business must be to find a vehicle other than the Grand Old Party.

—*Clyde Wilson*

RIVERBOAT CASINOS are giant money-sucking machines. A $30 million riverboat casino operated by Harrah's can suck in $200,000 a day from bettors, assuming a typical daily loss of $50 per customer. This kind of high-stakes betting used to be called gambling. But liberals have come up with a new name—"gaming." It was formerly recognized as a vice. But it is now classed as "recreation" and "entertainment."

The difference is that state and local governments have taken over the gambling rackets, now known as the "gaming industry." The St. Louis Port Authority estimates that the new "gaming industry" on its riverfront when fully operational with four casinos will bring in "revenues" of $240 million a year and provide the city with $33 million in new tax dollars.

The truth is that state and local governments are hooked on the myth that they can gamble their way to prosperity—a notion every bit as ludicrous as Washington's belief that it can tax-and-spend the nation to boom times. Riverboat casinos are the ultimate expression of the fantasy—expressed in state-paid TV ads—that the way to become a millionaire is not through hard work and saving but to bet the grocery money against the long odds of lotteries and casinos.

Armed with these odds, gambling pros on the riverboats reel in chumps by the thousands and systematically strip them of their cash before dumping them ashore. It all takes place in an atmosphere of great fun and frivolity while local and state governments cheer them on in anticipation of sharing the loot. The people who own and run these boats are essentially fast-buck artists who

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jump in quick when there is a new gambling—excuse me, gaming—opportunity and jump out fast when their "business" slows down. Witness how three of the five riverboat casinos in Iowa hoisted anchor after only two years when juicier "markets" opened up in other states.

The riverboat gambling law passed by the Missouri Legislature and approved by Governor Carnahan calls for a $50,000 licensing fee (to keep the mom-and-pop casino operators out) and provides for the state to collect 20 percent of the "adjusted gross income" of these boats. But it is a safe bet that the social costs of teaching so many citizens to become habitual gamblers will largely nullify the gains that Governor Carnahan and the Democratic majority in the state legislature are gambling on. In virtually every case, increased gambling is accompanied by higher welfare costs, much greater costs for treating compulsive gamblers, and increased crime.

There are three primary reasons the riverboat casino craze will likely end with a whimper. First, fierce competition is emerging as paddleboat owners from every state with a major waterway scramble to join the riverboat "gold rush." Illinois has already launched eight riverboat casinos, Missouri is scrambling to put a raft of new riverboats in the water, and Indiana has just approved 12 more. The *President-Casino Mississippi*, which opened in Biloxi in August 1992, has already seen its competition increase from zero to at least six riverboats in the area. High-stakes land-based casino operators also have big plans for launching riverboat operations. As this frenzy heats up, winnings are bound to fall and many of these "dreamboats" will sink in a river of red ink.

Second, the flood of new gambling money being anticipated is not going to arrive. A study by the St. Louis Port Authority found that 5.7 million of the 7.2 million gamblers expected to patronize the new floating gambling joints will be from the St. Louis area. "This means that 80 percent of the money spent on gambling here would have otherwise been spent on other forms of entertainment—or remained in accounts in St. Louis banks," the *St. Louis Business Journal* reported. After the initial wave of "gulls" and compulsive gamblers has been fleeced, the public enthusiasm for this organized robbery almost certainly will wane. The supply of pigeons is not infinite.

Third, the Democrats who have ruled the Missouri Legislature for decades, along with tax king Mel Carnahan, will probably be thrown out by Missourians when they grow tired of the high taxes, rabid promotion of gambling, and new $300 million school tax law that makes puppets of local school districts.

St. Louisans would do well to consider the experience of Alton, as told recently by John J. Dunphy, owner of a bookstore in that city. Dunphy reports that the arrival of the original *Alton Belle* casino at this city in 1991 brought more than $3 million in proceeds to the city government but that the effect on Alton business has been negligible. Dunphy says he has yet to have a blackjack player fresh off the *Belle* dash into his bookshop to purchase the works of Ibsen or Camus. And even the local bars failed to get new business from *Belle* patrons. Other retailers have confirmed that those who come to try their luck on the *Alton Belle* just gamble and go home.

St. Louisans should ask themselves if they really want wall-to-wall riverboat casinos on their riverfront. That is what they are liable to get if the city fills four available berths with floating casinos. That noted philanthropist Donald Trump has indicated an interest in establishing a *world-class* casino in St. Louis and has said that he might toss in a convention center/hotel to sweeten the deal. But should St. Louisans aspire to see their city turn into Las Vegas East? They should also ponder the prospect of having their city government influenced by multimillionaire casino-boat owners. Pittsburgh mogul John Connelly, chairman and chief executive of President Riverboat Casinos, Inc., is sitting on a $390 million pile of stock in that company. As I was writing this, he was also about to become nearly $80 million richer by issuing two million shares of stock in his company (which will reduce his share to 32.4 percent) in anticipation of opening the *Admiral* casino on the St. Louis riverfront.

Connelly's influence in St. Louis is already attested to by the fact that for $20,580 a year his companies control six premium lease slots on the St. Louis riverfront, including three that could be used for gambling boats. The six include the permanently moored Robert E. Lee restaurant, the *Becky Thatcher*, *Huck Finn*, and *Tom Sawyer* cruise ships, and, in between these, the *Admiral* and vacant *President* and *Belle of St. Louis*, as well as an office barge. Connelly was also able to wangle state legislative approval, via Representative Jet Banks (D-St. Louis), to have his *Admiral* casino remain permanently moored on the St. Louis riverfront while other riverboat casinos have to cruise the Mississippi.

Iowa's riverboat gambling director, Chuck Patton, admits that casinos have brought an increase in crime to his state. When high-rollers turn the St. Louis riverfront into a gambling mecca, more police will be needed on the riverfront. But where will the city get the added police when it is already far short of the number of officers needed to fight St. Louis's escalating crime?

As we go to press, the Missouri Supreme Court has just ruled that the statute authorizing riverboat casinos in the state is unconstitutional because it excludes certain types of gambling. Missouri's legislature has hence authorized a statewide vote—perhaps as early as April—for a constitutional amendment approving riverboat casinos.

But regardless of how this plays out, Missourians should remember that government is supposed to protect the interests of citizens and that encouraging Missourians to try their luck against the long odds of riverboat games—at an average loss of $50 per customer—is a disservice to the people the government is sworn to protect. Claiming these money-grabbing water palaces will produce jobs and prosperity is a stunt worthy of Barnum.

—*Oliver Starr, Jr.*

VANCOUVER was a stately if inelegant place when I last visited it 26 years ago. The harbor was a breathtaking sight, although the downtown area was rundown and the architecture undistinguished. Still, Vancouver was memorable because it was a city framed by mountains, with extraordinary vistas and a congenial climate. It had a rare calm and charm, the kind of charm that lures you into returning.

Obviously the mountains, the vistas, and the congenial climate haven't disappeared. Moreover, Vancouver has developed its inner city. Gastown, the old city, now has precious shops and bistros that rival any in San Francisco, and Pacific Center Mall is reputedly the largest underground mall on the continent. All the chic stores can be found here, from Laura Ashley to Ralph Lauren. The area

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surrounding Stanley Park has high-rise apartments with high-rise rental fees. Granville and Maritime, once pristine islands at the gateway of the harbor, are now built-up middle-class neighborhoods with museums and playgrounds and are the site of a world-famous bathtub race—bathtubs outfitted with outboard engines racing across the harbor. By any measure Vancouver has entered the ranks of the world's greatest cities. Yet this is only part of the story, perhaps the least important part.

When Vancouver was discovered by the cognoscenti in the 60's, it became a melting pot for every nationality and every "lifestyle." Its local government, as well as its atmosphere, promoted liberal ideas, manifest in permissiveness. While the surrounding residents of British Columbia are notably conservative, Vancouver is latitudinarian. Robson Street—one of the main shopping streets—has a gravitational pull for thrill-seekers, not unlike Greenwich Village in New York. When San Francisco started to lose its allure in the 70's, due in part to the enormous immigration there, many of its residents headed north to Seattle and Vancouver.

In Vancouver one is minutes from skiing and seconds from the beach. Kayaking and sledding are easily possible in the same day. But these assets, along with the city's permissiveness, have created a dark underbelly apparent even to the weekend tourist. Vancouver is inundated with freaks. They can be found on every corner, in every alcove; the drugged-out detritus of the 60's has its counterpart in the street beggars of the present. Most are a peaceful, if annoying, presence, but some are cloying and persistent. The once peaceful streets of Vancouver are noisy with street sounds, and violence has raised its ugly head in a city once devoid of it. From stately past to decadent present, Vancouver has caught the urban disease.

Motorcyclists pierce the air with the throttle at full blast. Teenagers from the Far East who barely speak English punctuate every sentence with the "f-word," as if this is a sign of their newly discovered manhood. Homosexuals sit shirtless in second-floor windows, eyeing the parade of visitors on Robson Street. The thumping, pulsating sound of rock music flows from the many clubs at street level. Like many cities, this one is a phantasmagoria of sights, sounds, and smells.

In some ways Vancouver is surprising. Not only is this not the city of two decades ago, it is a city trying desperately to catch up with the excesses of urban life on the rest of the continent. Long hair on males once voguish elsewhere is clearly in vogue here. Earrings in the nose and lips are almost a calling card among the young. Street musicians make it hard to walk on the sidewalks. And beggars, mostly young, say with an air of experience, "Can you spare some change?"

Like many cities, Vancouver is a mixed bag. A walk through Stanley Park offers staggeringly beautiful harbor scenes, and the Douglas fir trees rise to the sky like centurions guarding the city. There is something jejune, almost childlike, in this city where play is a preoccupation and narcissism an obsession. Vancouver does indeed retain some of its distinctive character.

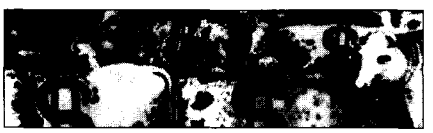
Yet, this said, I don't really care whether I see this place again. The hardness already evident on the streets will most likely grow worse. The permissiveness (read: tolerance) will breed a new generation of immigrants far more interested in bringing their old ways to Canada than in assimilating to the ways of their host country. This, too, will be accepted by a city caught in the grip of urban pseudo-sophistication. The Vancouver of my memory has faded, replaced by a Vancouver shorn of its romance and stateliness. It is merely a big city located in a beautiful spot. Perhaps it should simply be appreciated for what it is, since it will not recapture what it once was.

—Herbert London

"ALL ARTISTS," my old friend Ed Abbey was fond of saying, "should have their lips sewn shut." Certainly, to judge by current trends in the art world, many ought to have their fingers broken, their easels burned, their chisels hammered into plowshares.

Witness, to name but one instance, last summer's Kulturfest in sunny San Ysidro, California, where a group of so-called performance artists dispensed ten-dollar bills to illegal aliens—beg pardon, undocumented workers—to demonstrate the metaphysical resonance of cash. Whether the bewildered Mexicans and Central Americans whose photographs graced national newspapers got the point is a matter of speculation, but they seemed pleased by the donors' largess. That generosity was, of course, federally funded until an embarrassed national arts program pulled its grant.

Just as silly is a recent excursion into mobile art that had as its setting the normally sane state of Wyoming. For reasons that have yet to emerge, a thirtysomething painter named Pip Brant decided that a herd of 111 cows on a Pinedale ranch was incomplete without the application of her gifts. Bravely taking brush in hand, she and two assistants set about painting the poor bovines with one-word messages to some alien god: "EVERY." "BIRDS." "PARTS." For this Ms. Brant received a grant of $4,000 from a federally supported foundation in nearby Montana, a place artistically sober until folks like Jane Fonda and Robin Williams began buying up ranches and Californicating the Big Sky State.



Ms. Brant had lofty goals. "This is art," she bleated, "that can be interpreted on many levels. . . . It's a reflection of the fragmentation that's happening in the West and on another level it's about spontaneous poetry since the cows are going to randomly reorder the words for us and make new meanings." Hmmm. Piling gibberish on gibberish, another local artist remarked. "It's people who don't understand how important cows are that think they're stupid. In ancient times there were cow goddesses. We need to look at how cows are linked to nourishment, nurturing, and motherhood. Our idea is to propose an alternative to the masculine winning of the West, to show women's role in creating regional culture here." Someone bring us a needle and thread now, please.

This is a Weimar-like time when a female performance artist can earn ample federal grants by inserting certain vegetables into certain places you would not have thought imaginable, when an Italian painter can become a millionaire by vending cans of his own excrement. Painting foot-high block letters on cows and tossing out dollars to visiting Latinos are innocuous by comparison, to be sure. For all that, the time is ripe to question, once again, whether the government's business is to provide daily bread to this asinine corps.

—Gregory McNamee

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by Samuel Francis

Forty Years After

Americans have grown fond of celebrating anniversaries of one kind or another. I first noticed this new habit during the national thrombosis over the Statue of Liberty back in 1986, but more recently the habit has swollen into something like an epidemic. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, we have endured the anniversaries of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the birth of Thomas Jefferson, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Munich Accord of 1938, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the emancipation of Negro slaves, the assassination of John Kennedy, the liberation of Dachau, and every stage, factual or fictitious, in the life and career of Martin Luther King, Jr., not to mention a number of other events of equally galactic significance that just happen to elude my memory. The reason for the rigorous observance of these commemorative occasions ought to be clear to those Americans who have even the dimmest glimmer of what is going on in their country today. Anniversaries, like national holidays, provide excellent opportunities to subvert the meanings of historic events as understood by a particular culture and to substitute other meanings of those same events as understood and preferred by the exponents of a rival culture.

This month we will observe yet another anniversary, that of the *Brown* v. *The Board of Education* decision that Earl Warren and a unanimous Supreme Court handed down to an unsuspecting nation exactly 40 years ago. The *Brown* decision, of course, marked the beginning of that extended political, cultural, and racial revolution that has come to be known to its adherents as the "civil rights movement," and for all the genuflections to Rosa Parks and "Dr." King that are popular and even obligatory today, the forces that really allowed the movement and the revolution to succeed were: the Warren Court, which issued the decision; the Eisenhower administration, which enforced it with federal troops in Little Rock; and a Southern white population that, when confronted with real soldiers in the streets, rather quickly muted its braggadocio about "white supremacy" and the heritage of Lee and Jackson and did what it was instructed to do. Since the movement and its adherents have today everywhere triumphed, the meaning that will be imposed on the anniversary of the *Brown* decision will be the meaning of those victors, and it most definitely will not be the meaning of those Americans who dissented from the decision and the revolution that ensued from it but who preferred a comfortable and convenient silence to any serious resistance.

Obviously, in the course of observing its anniversary, *Brown* will be hailed as the ruling that struck down school segregation laws as unconstitutional and that paved the way for the racial integration that the nation so amicably enjoys today. The irony of this interpretation is that racial integration as the architects of the *Brown* decision claimed to understand it and to promote it is virtually nonexistent in the United States today. As Jared Taylor wrote in a survey of racial integration last year, "The attempt to integrate public elementary and high schools has been a fiasco. All across the country the attempt followed the same pattern: once the number of non-whites reached a certain level, standards collapsed and whites moved to the suburbs. During the past 25 years, most big-city public schools lost nearly all their white students. In Atlanta their percentage went from 41 percent to 7 percent, in New Orleans from 34 percent to 8 percent, in Detroit from 41 percent to 9 percent, in Los Angeles from 55 percent to 16 percent. . . . Today, two thirds of all black children go to schools that are predominantly non-white."

Of course, the United States today is a racially integrated society, but it has not been integrated by means publicly advocated by the architects of *Brown* (or indeed of the "civil rights movement")—the simple removal of racial segregation from public laws, to be followed by the voluntary and harmonious social mixture of the races. Racial integration has come about, quite simply, because of force—because of forced busing imposed by unelected judge and bureaucrat with federal troops at his back; because of affirmative action laws and policies that most Americans do not want and do not believe in; because of threats (not infrequently carried out) of prosecutions, law suits, boycotts, and other instruments of intimidation directed against restaurants, hotels, companies, and other private institutions that fail to meet the demands of integrationists; and because of a massive and continuous inundation of propaganda in every conceivable form and over every conceivable medium of communication to enforce racial right-think and punish and scorn racial wrong-think.

The *Brown* decision, then, cannot accurately be interpreted as the triumph of "freedom" over "force." At best, it can be seen as the triumph of one level of force (federal) for one purpose (racial integration) over a lesser level of force (state and local) for another purpose (racial segregation). But since the federal level of force has had to be applied strenuously and consistently to induce even minimal racial integration in places where no force at all prevented it, a more accurate interpretation of *Brown* and the "movement" for which it was the official signal and sanction would be that it actually achieved the opposite of increasing freedom, that it succeeded only in replacing what often was free and noncoercive (segregated) association with unfree and forced (integrated) association.

Defenders of *Brown* today generally do not shrink from just this interpretation of it, though it is directly contrary to the original intent, if you will, of the case and those who crafted it. But *Brown* itself, of course, largely rejected the whole concept of "original intent" jurisprudence, and that rejection should have been a warning to those who supported the Court's decision: those who thought it applied only to Southern Jim Crow statutes and not to such things as quotas that exclude their sons from law and medical schools. Since the Court rejected the rule of "original intent" in the one case, why should anyone have expected it or other courts to respect that rule in other cases where its application might offer inconvenient obstacles to the desired results?

The only feasible moral defense of the

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Brown decision today is not that it replaced force with freedom but that it replaced one kind of free but morally inferior conduct (segregation) with unfree but morally superior conduct (integration). That defense is also preposterous on its face, if only because conduct that is unfree and forced cannot be morally better than conduct that is freely chosen and unforced, but its preposterousness does not mean that it is not seriously believed. Indeed, in one form or another, it seems to be the standard defense of the *Brown* decision (and in a larger sense of all subsequent "civil rights" laws and policies) through the unexamined (or perhaps all too well examined) premise that racial integration, no matter why or how it is achieved, is preferable to racial segregation, even if the racial segregation is voluntary on the part of both races. But of course this premise needs some qualification; it is not to be taken to mean that nonwhites must integrate when they don't want to. As Jared Taylor has also pointed out, it is entirely permissible for nonwhites to retain racially reserved jobs and positions, racially exclusive schools, clubs, and universities, and racially discriminatory language and conduct; only nonwhites are permitted to question the desirability of racial integration at all. Sometimes this sort of thing—"double standards," "reverse discrimination," or "Afro-racism"—is deplored by those racial liberals who, like earlier liberals, actually thought you could make their toy train of egalitarianism stop at whatever stations you wanted, but more often even the whining of dispirited and disenchanted liberals is drowned out by those who now disclose the real meaning of *Brown* and the revolution it ignited.

The meaning of the revolution has long been perfectly clear. The revolution consists of what Lothrop Stoddard, the American racist writer of the 1920's, called in the franker language of that era "The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy." Regardless of the alarmist connotations of Stoddard's phrase, it ought to be fairly obvious today that the cognitive content of the expression is unexceptionable. You may be for or against "white supremacy" or a "rising tide of color" and you may think either or both of them good, bad, or as morally meaningless as the death of grasshoppers at the end of the summer, but there is not much doubt, not only in the United States in the 70 years or so since Stoddard wrote but also throughout the world, that "white supremacy" has been displaced and that the beneficiaries of that racial displacement have been largely nonwhites or "people of color." This development should not be surprising to anyone who is aware of global demographic trends, let alone to anyone who has paid attention to the fate of the European colonies from the British withdrawal from India to the recent election in South Africa.

Of course, it *is* surprising to many and remains shocking to talk about openly, because the superstitions of liberalism and egalitarianism lead those who believe in them to expect the sequel of white supremacy to be racial equality and not just domination by a different race. Yet historian William H. McNeill argues in a set of lectures delivered in 1985 that what he calls "ethnic hierarchy" is "on the rise, everywhere," and that it is indeed the normal condition of human civilizations. "Other civilized societies have almost always accepted and enforced inequality among the diverse ethnic groups of which they were composed," he writes. McNeill's term "ethnic hierarchy," of course, consists of words derived from Greek; if those words are loosely (but not too loosely) translated into their Latin equivalents, it is fairly clear that McNeill is saying that racial domination, in one form or another, is the norm of human civilizations, that ethnic and racial equality has little historical foundation, and that the illusion of such equality is about to be rudely dispelled.

It is already being dispelled, at least for some white Americans. Last summer, the Newhouse News Service published the results of a multistate survey conducted for it by the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan on the effects of immigration into the United States on "white flight" from regions within it. The survey found that while "two-thirds of all new immigrants poured into just seven states," the "non-Hispanic whites in those states are fleeing to places largely untouched by immigration." Between 1985 and 1990, "New York lost more than a half-million whites in its exchanges with other states; Texas and Illinois more than a quarter-million; New Jersey nearly 200,000, and Massachusetts 114,000." California "experienced an exodus of struggling middle- and working-class whites, nearly 100,000 households." What used to occur at the local level of city and suburb, because of the impact of the *Brown* decision on school districts, is now beginning to happen at the state level because of the combined impact of nonwhite immigration into the United States and the legal, political, and cultural legacy of *Brown*. What is happening, in short, is "white flight" from entire states as their white populations are displaced by nonwhites pushing into their territories. When the "white flight" from European colonies took place in earlier decades, the whites flew to Europe and the United States. Since Americans at least are already flying to the interior of their own country, it's not clear to what other nations future waves of white flighters will fly, any more than it is clear where the South African whites who have now (with U.S. help) lost their country will go.

The real meaning of the *Brown* decision, and of the subsequent history of the "civil rights movement," is not that it caused or initiated Stoddard's "Rising Tide of Color." In Stoddard's view, the "revolution" had begun some decades earlier. What events like *Brown* accomplished was to confirm that certain white elites were on the side of the revolution, that the Warren Court, the Eisenhower (as well as the later Kennedy and Johnson) administration, and eventually the whole established political, economic, and cultural leadership of the nation were supportive of the dethronement of whites as the dominant group in the United States. No doubt many in these elites actually believed their own egalitarian claims, though almost none of them believed in them so strongly that they practiced racial integration in the choice of their own places of residence or in the education of their own children. But whatever their motives, the result of their official endorsement in the *Brown* decision of a revolution against their own people and civilization has been and promises to be the displacement of that people as the dominant political and cultural core of the nation and the enthronement of other and increasingly hostile racial and ethnic strains in their place. Whether this is an anniversary of something you want to celebrate is another matter, but at least you should understand exactly what it is you are observing and being made to observe by the new rulers of what used to be your nation.

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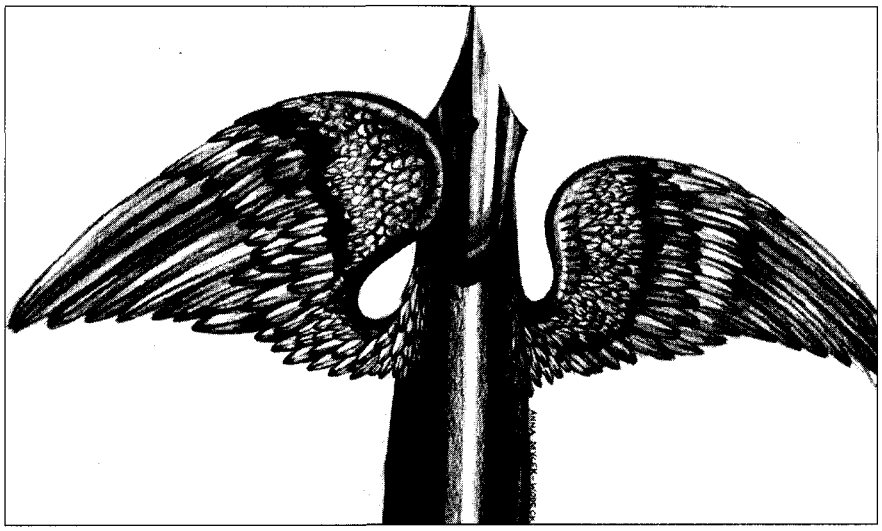

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Southern Men, American Persons

by Thomas Fleming

"Sweet home Alabama / Where the skies are so blue." It has been many years since anyone made money from patriotic songs dedicated to Illinois or New Jersey. Chicago and New York have their anthems of course, to say nothing of San Francisco, but no one is going to get into a fight over "the city that never sleeps" or "little cable cars climbing halfway to the stars." In the 19th century, we did celebrate the rivers of the midsection: the Ohio and the Wabash, but none of them was so famous as the inconsequential Suwannee celebrated by Stephen Foster and later taken up by New York songwriters as a codeword for the sentimentalized South: "How I love ya, how I love ya, my dear old Swanee."

We are become a cynical and heartless people, more prone to deride than to celebrate our hometowns, and yet Charlie Daniels virtually drips with sentiment as he sings of "Carolina," and Merle Haggard was proud to be an Okie from Muskogee, which he was not. If northern songwriters can occasionally write movingly of the troubles of Allentown, Pennsylvania, the tone of boosterism and defiance is almost exclusively confined to the South. "If the South had won the war, we'd a had it made," Hank Williams Jr. was singing a few years ago, just when the critics were praising him for giving up his Southern nationalism.

Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama" remains the benchmark Southern song, because it is deliberately combative, throwing down the gauntlet to the Canadian leftist who had stuck his nose into what did not concern him. In "Southern Man," Neil Young had cried shame on Southerners for the usual reasons. One might have thought that an Anglo-Canadian could have better spent his time on the Ojibwa, victims of both toxic waste and toxic welfare, or the French, whose identity the English did their best to eliminate. "Mr. Young, does your conscience bother you?"

One does not need to turn to popular music to find signs of Southern chauvinism. Southern fiction has so dominated the United States in this century that some people have said there are only two kinds of American writers, Southerners and Jews. This is an exaggeration, but just barely, and despite the considerable differences that separate Southerners and Jews, the success of both groups depends on their atavisms: loyalty to kinfolk, preservation of tradition, and suspicion of aliens.

In America Faulkner could only have been a Southerner, because only a Southerner can spend his life wrestling with what it means to be a Southerner. A century and a half ago, when Nathaniel Hawthorne was crafting his nearly perfect stories of Puritan life, the Northeastern writer was already out of touch with his people, and as a thin stream of civilization flowed westward in the wake of the pioneers, region after region went through a brief period of literary exaltation—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, the Plains States—before the stream lost itself in the deserts of the West. The closest approximation to a northern Faulkner may be Glenway Wescott, of an old Yankee family in Wisconsin. But Wescott left Wisconsin at an early age, and the narrator of *The Grandmothers*—an almost too beautiful novel tracing his own family's descent—is an expatriate, like Hemingway and Fitzgerald.

Not all Southern writers have been obsessed with the land and its history—Walker Percy and George Garrett are notable exceptions—but, as the essays in this number illustrate, the land and its people was the dominant theme of the Agrarians as well as of Faulkner, and it is still providing Fred Chappell and Wendell Berry with the matter of literature. There is nothing unusual in this; what is unusual is what has happened to the rest of the American Empire, where people of my generation can scarcely tell a single tale of their grandparents and where it is nothing for families to spread themselves across the continent like so many toys shaken on a child's blanket.

No human civilization has ever been created by nomads—although even true nomads have their sense of place—and whether one looks at Athens in the fifth century or Florence in the 14th or Edinburgh in the 18th, the great works that define our culture as "the West" were created by men who knew

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who their people were and knew the land they lived on. Here in the Middle West, only the Indians have a right to speak of their ancestors or call the land sacred, and when they complain of the desecration of funeral mounds, they are defended only by crackpot leftists who have forgotten to turn down the thermostat in their sweatlodge. Self-described conservatives—what a word that is becoming—make fun of people who do not like to see the bones of their ancestors put on display in Barnum's museum.

A people such as we have become in the United States is incapable of creating or even receiving the gifts of civilization. Because human beings are, as a species, almost infinitely creative, there are individuals sporadically writing books or composing music that is worth some attention, but there is nothing specifically American unless it be that self-abusive consumerism that has overstocked California with two-legged parasites and keeps the national economy grinding on to the doomsday we are preparing for ourselves. Eating and spending, we lay waste our powers. If in the next century there is a civilization in North America, it will have been the creation of Mexicans or French Canadians or Indians or even, if they survive, Southerners.

One of the chief effects of the South's survival would be the challenge it would represent to other sections. An arrogant and overbearing Southern culture could antagonize Yankees or Midwesterners to rediscover their own identity. In the greatest political novel of the century, Chesterton's *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, one of the dreariest of London's neighborhoods takes over the city, thereby inciting the other neighborhoods to assert their independence. The rest of the country seems to need the South, if only as a whipping boy. What will we do when it is gone?

Much of the South is no doubt gone, and I have never been persuaded by John Reed's Pollyanisms about Southern distinctiveness surviving in the suburbs. So much talk about Southern identity and Southern culture cannot be a good thing: members of authentic cultures do not have to wear T-shirts or attend conferences to prove who they are. All the various Southern culture projects are a Disneyland surrogate for the real thing, and the professional Southerner today is as authentic as a stage Irishman or a Stepford wife. They love the South, because, now that they have got over the race thing, Southerners are actually more tolerant, more humane, more—well—northern than northerners. I cannot print my response to this nonsense in a family magazine. It is better for blacks and whites to hate each other, if the fruits of toleration are lies and cowardice, just as I would welcome the return of the persecuting spirit to Christianity, if it meant the faith was strong enough to justify torture and death.

The real South was and is a dangerous place, more like Mexico than Chapel Hill, and if you say the wrong thing or look the wrong way at the wrong time, there will be some cracker to make an issue out of it. And not just crackers. Southern men of good family may no longer fight duels, but they might just be willing to slap you silly or take revenge in less obvious ways. Ted Turner is reckoned to be one of the nastiest businessmen in America, and I sometimes wonder if he would be less ruthless, if he had been able to call out his rivals.

Everywhere I go, I meet real Southerners who are not about to apologize for either their family or their flag. The other night I received a telephone call from a perfect stranger who wanted some historical ammunition. At a local high school named for General Lee, some students had been displaying the Confederate flag until the superintendent issued a decree prohibiting it, and my caller—an articulate but not educated Southerner—wanted to defend the students. When all is said and done, there is only one argument that counts in these flag controversies, and that is loyalty. One can argue all day about the comparative sins of Southern slaveowners and Yankee capitalists, but for real men and women, all that matters is the love they bear their people and their land. If Southerners are going to be asked to repudiate their flag and their history, do not imagine it will make them good Americans. The most that can be hoped for is that they will turn into one more whining minority.

The war against the South did not end in 1865 or even 1876, when the last federal troops were pulled out of Southern states. After some years of peace, the war was renewed in the 50's and 60's, and under our rednecked Rhodes Scholar President it has heated up again. Consider the Byron De La Beckwith trial. I had always assumed, without having any particular knowledge, that "Delay" was guilty, and if I had served on his first jury, I would have voted guilty. But the jurors felt differently, and I think I understand why. Mississippi was under invasion, by federal marshals, northern leftists, and a civil rights movement that was every day proclaiming race war against Southern whites. If forced to choose between their people and its enemies, most decent, simple people will choose their own. We cannot ask ordinary people to get above their raising, and if we do, we are really demanding that they hate themselves.

In any event, Beckwith was tried twice, and one had thought that particular phase of the war was over. But no, this pathetic and cracked old man, who under other circumstances could have plead mental incompetence, was forced to go through it all again. I cannot blame the family of Medgar Evers for wanting vengeance. In their place, I might have done it myself. But a show trial of this kind implicates the entire nation in a sensitivity witchhunt that will be a source of embarrassment to our posterity, if there is a posterity that can read books and make up its own mind.

I am not in favor of any of these historic trials. There is something coldhearted and nasty about the pursuit of supposed ex-Nazis, like John Demjanjuk, who after years of peaceful and harmless existence are dragged forth as scapegoats for the sins of our own insensitive society. I felt the same way about the middle-aged member of the Weather Underground—a successful businesswoman, a wife and mother—what purpose does it serve to put her in jail? Campuses in the 60's were the scene of civil war, and although I have no compunction about blaming the left for what it did in those days, the war is over, and it is time for amnesty—for the students and for the cops and for the National Guardsmen at Kent State and even for Richard Nixon and Mayor Daley.

For two decades after the War Between the States, the Kansas-Missouri border war was kept alive by a number of young men who had fought under the black flag with Quantrill and Anderson. The Youngers were caught in Northfield, Minnesota, and Jesse James was murdered by an assassin hired by the governor of Missouri. When Frank James finally turned himself in to be tried, no one thought Frank was exactly innocent of all charges, but his acquittal meant that after three decades of fighting, the war was over. Unfortunately, the war

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against the South is not over, and the South's enemies—the liberal-conservative Establishment that owns and operates the United States as a private monopoly—will not rest until they have erased every vestige of the Southern identity.

One typical complaint against the Confederate flag is that it is the symbol of treason and rebellion. I say "typical," because no one who knew anything of our history would be so obtuse. The withdrawal of a commonwealth from a federation does not constitute rebellion, much less treason, either in political theory or in international law. There are those who will say that the states of the Union did not have a right to secede. They are wrong, but let us concede the point. The Virginians and Carolinians of the 1860's certainly had better right to secede than their fathers and grandfathers who liberated their states from British rule, and yet we are not ashamed of Washington and Adams, and we do not curse the memory of these traitors to the only lawfully constituted authority that had been conceivable from the time John Smith set foot in Virginia. The government of Andrew Johnson had wanted to try Jefferson Davis for treason, but the President thought better of it when he realized that world opinion would be solidly against him.

So far from being traitors to the American Republic, Southerners have been, at least since the Spanish-American War, the greatest chauvinists, sensitive to any blot on the national honor, eager for war, and proud of the Stars and Stripes. It is a pernicious piece of nonsense to claim that a man cannot be loyal to his state or region without being disloyal to his nation. That is like saying a man cannot be a good father or a good Baptist, unless he is just a little bit of a traitor to the state that demands perfect and total loyalty.

I often think of our late friend, M.E. Bradford. The only time I think we seriously disagreed was during the Gulf War. He understood and accepted all the criticisms I made against the injustice and imprudence of that crusade for democracy, and yet, at the end of a discussion, he would always come back to the same point: it would do Americans good to punish the strutting little despot who had insulted our country.

I do not think I ever met a more patriotic American: he had served his country in the Navy, had devoted much of his valuable time to political battles both in Texas and in Washington, and had spent much of his later years explaining the meaning of the Constitution to a nation that had turned its back on the rule of law. As a leader of the conservative coalition, he had been an excellent fighter on behalf of principle. His only weakness was that he was a very poor hater. He could get temporarily incensed against those who lied against him—Irving Kristol and George Will—but he could not bring himself to seek revenge and would not countenance it in his friends. As Paul Gottfried always used to say, Mel was too much of a Christian to make a good politician.

To his academic colleagues, even those who considered themselves his friends, Mel often seemed an anomaly. Here was a literary historian who could have carved out a very comfortable career, if only he had stuck to his trade and avoided controversy. When Clyde Wilson's volume of essays *Why the South Will Survive* was published in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of *I'll Take My Stand*, the reviewer in the *Virginia Quarterly* took all the contributors to task for politicizing the Agrarian inheritance. The shaft was aimed at Mel, of course, to make it appear that he had diverted a literary movement into politics.

But the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* were nothing if not political, and several of them wanted to call the volume *Tracts Against Communism*. Indeed, it is hard to think of a man of letters more political than Donald Davidson. Even if he had tried, Mel Bradford could not have disentangled politics from literature, not in the trivial sense that he could not recognize literary merit in liberal writers, but because the career of the writer and scholar was bound up with the community that had given him life and cultural sustenance. His role was not to go off into the wilderness in order to discover some unheard of system of thought and expression to spark a revolution. On the contrary. Speaking of the resemblance of Southern writers to ancient Romans, he wrote: "[B]oth reflect the all-absorbing corporate spirit of the culture for which they speak. The Southern writer, like his ancient counterpart, has almost always felt the pressure to be a public man and to perform a service in relation to that powerful sense of cultural identity."

For me, Mel was a kind of touchstone of integrity. Whatever decency a man had was sure to be called forth and encouraged by the mere fact of knowing Mel, and if there were those who responded to his open nature with distrust and chicane, they revealed themselves for what they were. In offering this number of *Chronicles* to M.E. Bradford, we are paying tribute to a man who represented the last link in many chains: a man of letters who put his pen to his nation's use, a passionate Southerner and loyal American, a faithful friend, and a Christian husband and father who did his duty. ◦c

The Modern Boswell

by Thomas Fleming

For Mel and Marie

This is what you've waited for all your life,
storing up every stupid thing he said.
You spent these thirty years sharpening the knife
you stuck into his back once he was dead.

What was it you were thinking all those years
you played the colleague, confidant, and friend?
He blurbed your books, true, put up with your sneers
at his success. *You* got him in the end,

Why? Was it that he was just too damn good?
Others you might have hoped to emulate,
by doing even half the work you could.
Being himself he made you second-rate.

We hate whom we have harmed, says Tacitus,
so you elucidate his path to hell,
a friendless and unransomed Theseus
who stumbled on his love for you and fell.

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Synaptic Gap

by Daniel Franko Goldman

In no other species but Man
are disparities of intellect so glaring.
No doubt some apes are underachievers; some dogs and bears
learn circus tricks more readily than their duller brethren;
among birds of a particular species, some use sticks as levers
to pry their shellfish open, while others, more dimwitted, pound
the bivalves repeatedly on rocks, a plodding, less elegant process
than that of the tool-users. This skill (or its absence) is passed
by bird parents to offspring, and the inequity persists, down
avian generations. All of that said, it is nonetheless true
that the intramural gap between the brightest and the dullest
individual members of subhuman species is really quite narrow;
in Man, it is huge, and nothing can alter it. Moreover, in Man, the
gap makes more mischief. It is a matter of degree, but with a
salient, fateful difference: bears and birds obey their genes,
exempt from the need to engender organization. Man is mere
potential, helpless, frail, unprogrammed for achievement or even
for survival on his own, gravid with promise, but unequipped
to top it much, without a flawed and artificial overlay
of polity and politics, such fertile ground for the poisonous weeds
that sprout in our unique synaptic gap. These pettifogging perils
bedeviled bands of hunter-gatherers, and later, tribes
and cities and nation-states and bloated empires, in
exponential, malignant growth. Soon or late, they foundered,
all, in waters whipped to needless froth
by the struggles of the stupid, the frustrations of the wise.
The strong balk at supporting the weak. The feckless
scorn strength once their bellies are full, a state of affairs
that soon becomes the norm, for their demands are enforced
as their numbers mimic strength and the strong grow ever weaker
in reciprocal decline. Desperate for order and falsified fairness,
Authority prescribes Procrustean beds, devices seductively simple
but too often fatal to those who lie on their leveling frames.
The shaken survivors of these hideous experiments hold seminars
around smoky fires and tug their smelly, yellowing beards.
Soon another tack is tried, and it too feeds
many a happy hyena before the bones
of a new crop of victims are bleached by the sun.
How then shall we order our affairs,
when the least of us understand nothing,
and the best not nearly enough?

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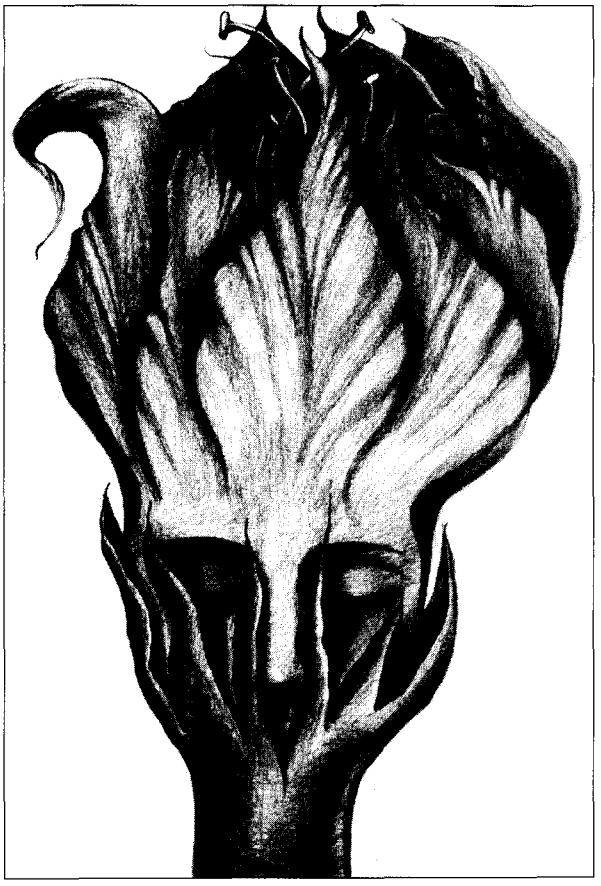
Donald Davidson and the Calculus of Memory

by M.E. Bradford



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The opening scene of the folk opera *Singin' Billy*, for which Donald Davidson wrote the book and lyrics, takes place in the yard of Callie Wilkins, "Miss Callie," the matriarch of Oconee Town in Pickens County, South Carolina. Two young people have married, John and Jennie Alsop, and are in danger of a shivaree. They flee but are caught by boys and girls from their community. Because all of this happens on her ground, "Miss Callie" is able to deliver the Alsops from the rough celebration that was in prospect. But before bride and groom depart in safety, the matriarch decides to give them a wedding present, a quilt from her own collection. Baskets full of her sewing are brought out and Callie, with the girls she has instructed in her art, sings "The Quilt Song," telling how to "read the signs" sewn into their work. Seen in context, her song is a proper introduction to the role of memory in Davidson's conception of the artist and to his view of the place of art in reinforcing and directing that faculty in its cultural and political work.

By the firelight, in the night-time
I sewed laughter, I sewed tears,
Woman's sorrow, woman's gladness,
Cloud and sunshine, days and years.

What the sword said in the battle,
What the axe said to the tree,
All our travels, all our wanderings—
Sewed to keep in memory.

All our travels, all our wanderings,
Sewed to keep in memory.

While the candle guttered slowly,
I remembered times of men.
I remembered kings and heroes,
Deathless deeds of now and then.

Red Culloden, grief of Sedgemoor
Washington and liberty,
Mountain riders, mountain rifles,
Sewed to keep in memory.

Mountain riders, mountain rifles,

M.E. Bradford (1934-1993) was from 1967 to 1993 a professor of English at the University of Dallas.

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Sewed to keep in memory.

From earth's corners four winds blowing
Cross to make this sacred sign,
Set in round where sun is center—
Heaven and earth by God's design.

Sweethearts' fancies, roadside flowers,
Lore of plant and lift of tree,
All we know that's wise and lovely,
Sewed to keep in memory.

All we know that's wise and lovely,
Sewed to keep in memory.

Miss Callie is talking about many quilts, not just the one she gives to Jennie. And she insists that the reproduction of a traditional pattern reminds those who know how to understand or "read the signs" preserved in such artifacts that they are an important part of the living memory of their culture. The elegiac truth sewn into various coverings is like the complex but well-orchestrated images that interpret the lives of men on the shield of Homer's Achilles. As do traditional ballads and many folktales, the quilts speak of "woman's sorrows, woman's gladness"—the harmonious relation of supposedly antithetical components in human life. Moreover, they prepare those who correctly read them to handle human limitations and the unhappy expectations attendant upon our mortal state, especially as they relate history to cosmic order, the heavenly manifestations of "God's design."

Contemplating the four winds brought together under the images of cross and sun, the poem concludes with a reference to *memoria* in its most benign phase: for the bride, "all we know that's wise and lovely" is now "sewed to keep in memory." The quilt is a mnemonic device, rendering in the language of form the prescriptive wisdom of womankind—or at least of women in a traditional culture. The reconciliation of laughter and tears in the artist's sewing represents what craft may achieve. But, as the Nashville Agrarians insisted, the process that gives us quilts, laws, marriage customs, folktales, tables, and chairs cannot be stimulated by "soft material poured in from the top." Or by chronic resentment of everything providential or inherited.

The idea that an elaborate and officially sanctioned memory is the best means of sustaining and perpetuating a particular culture is everywhere apparent in the work of Donald Davidson. For this poet/critic/historian, the cultivation of memory is all but an end in itself. Furthermore, Davidson is persistent in insisting that artifacts of various sorts are necessary to sustain and reinforce that memory in its workings, to preserve its authority and prevent its reduction from the concrete to general propositions and theories.

By means of such memory, history can be kept "fabulous," writes Davidson in "Woodlands, 1956-1960." In this work, the poet has come to South Carolina to visit the home of William Gilmore Simms, the great novelist of the American Revolution in the South, in the hope of reestablishing the communal memory of what happened to and among his people in those strenuous times. In Simms' novels, he finds history with an edge or admonitory "bite," which, as he informed his editors at Farrar and Rinehart, he intended to produce himself in the two-volume *The Tennessee*. Once he arrives at Woodlands, Simms' home, he anticipates that the "folk-chain" may be restored:

While by these glowing coals remembrance
Knits up its fitful present with the past,
And of its future measures what will last
In the crazy skein of our new circumstance.

This is the work of an artist who writes from a position *within* his culture: that is, his work if the "folk-chain" has not been broken.

To subsist entirely outside the scientific or rationalist explanations of the human condition, to be what historian Arnold Toynbee called a "futurist," is to be deprived of "deepest remembrance," of "a present continuous with the past" that "both draws from and feeds into the life of the imagination." Indeed, it is a form of "death." Southerners, as Davidson insisted as late as 1966, "still are a community bound together by imaginative possessions"—and by a "deep and even frightening intuition of man's radical dependence in this world." As he maintained throughout his old age, the most important recollection is the one recommended in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes: "Remember thy Creator." Historic empathy, rooted in affection, kinship, piety, and, above all, religious belief, is often at the center of a Davidson poem. It is a premodern, anti-Promethean, ontologically submissive attitude which assumes that we cannot fully possess our inheritance by analysis. For the patrimony it affirms is more of a "picture," song, or story than it is propositional truth. Living out of the resources of "transcendent memory," the artist, the raconteur, the farmer, the carpenter, the composer, and even the architect sustain a culture by rendering its sense of itself in their handiwork—just as Davidson hoped with *The Tennessee* to make his neighbors remember who they were, where they were, where they belonged, what they lived by, and what they lived for, and he hoped for the same with an audience of younger Southerners with his brief history of the context that defined his own career, *Southern Writers in the Modern World*. For the Fugitive and Agrarian movements had, as Davidson recognized, become part of the literary heritage of all Southerners by the time he produced this account of them in his 1957 lectures at Mercer University.

Though Davidson in his discussion of various forms of intellectual inheritance naturally emphasizes literary tradition, his opinion of even this restricted subject is grounded in an understanding of tradition in a larger sense as the way or *habitus* of a particular people: a set of customs, attitudes, prejudices, tastes, narratives, and prescriptive laws. Though no one was more conscious of our intellectual heritage as a mostly European people transplanted westward, Davidson also believed in the singularity of American civilization—and even more fiercely in the uniqueness of the South. Having a living, premodern cultural tradition as a primary imaginative resource was, as Davidson demonstrates in his essays on these writers, also important to Thomas Hardy and William Butler Yeats. That a Tennessee legacy, a prescription that is both his own and representative of his world, is equally important to his own making, his sense of belonging as rendered in his art, is the theme of Davidson's 1940 Phi Beta Kappa poem, "Hermitage":

Now let my habitude be where the vine

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Tumbles the sagging rails, and the late crow
Alone can challenge, whom for countersign
I open these uncrafty hands,
Unweaponed now, to seek upon the hill
Stones where no filial tribute can be lost,
Above the bones not laid in stranger's lands,
But their own earth commingles with their dust;
. . . . . .

Our home is far across the western wave
Back of whose steeps, forsaken and foregone,
Lost continents ebb we have no power to save.
The unending cycle breaks against this strand
Where blue tidewater laps our greener land.

And once the Virginia voyage brings us clear,
The hoodless eagles of the new-world skies
Towering, unshackle us, and the numberless deer
Confound the musket, and the wild geese rise,
Hurling southward with invincible wing
Omens unriddled for our journeying.

Rough pilgrims, faring far, whose Hesperus
Stooped by the piney woods or mountain cove,
Or whom the Buffalo Gods to the perilous
Lift of the Great Divide and the redwood grove
Spoke on and bid lay down from sea to sea
The sill and hearthstone of our destiny.

Salving our wounds, from the moody kings we came,
And even while kinsmen's shoulders raised and set
The first log true, bethought us of a name
To seal the firm lips of our unregret,
To charm the door against the former age
And bless the lintel of our hermitage.

Recite then while the inviolate hearth-flame leaps
How Ilion fell, and, hound at knee, recall
Platonic converse. Let the screech-owl keep
Watch where the fat maize crowds the forest wall.
High by the talking waters grows the cane;
Wild by the salt-lick herds the forest game.

And let the graybeard say when men and maids
Come for his blessing: "This I leave to you!
The Indian dream came on me in these glades,
And some strange bird-or-beast word named me new.
Peace be to all who keep the wilderness.
Cursed be the child who lets the freehold pass."

The heritage Davidson recovers and affirms in this sober invocation is not merely literary but also social and political. Or it is social and political first of all. But it so well informs and structures a text for extending this discussion of the theory of memory in his work that it deserves careful attention.

Davidson's "Hermitage" is a poem in three parts. It begins with distance between the speaker and his ancestor, a pioneer of Bedford County, Tennessee—specifically, of Chestnut Ridge. There Andrew Davidson, the poet's great-great-grandfather, had been the original white settler. Donald Davidson seeks him there. But there is, in the beginning of his quest, not enough memory to "find" the pioneer, the boy who, at 14, fought at King's Mountain and then, after losing a family to Indian raids, came as a man over the mountains to begin again. Full of "unuttered vows," the poet finds on Chestnut Ridge only the inclusive history of which Andrew Davidson, with his "gun and axe," constituted a part: the generic history of frontier Tennessee. But, in the poem's second section, within the "folk-chain," in "hearthside tale his rumor grows," and the poet is able to summon his forbear forward into our time.

In "a century of no belief . . . history is fabulous no longer." Yet we know from Davidson's "Soldier and Son" that through "communion and pietas" the son may come to know his father. This poem implies that generic history (here the memory of the War Between the States, or of a portion of it) can communicate a tradition and become personal if it is connected to an individual or setting that makes specific its example for those who seek it out. Or link it instead to a "hearthside tale"—as of "pibroch's wail" and "how red / The dew lay at Culloden." A fresh "clamor of danger" (foreshadowing World War II) brings Andrew Davidson "close"—rumors from the Old World of a "great wind in the twilight boughs," foretelling ruin brought on by "false faith" in "world-gazing prophecies" (utopian dreams). The speaker in "Hermitage" has reached the place where his great-grandfather, "the man of flints and pelts," built his cabin—the place where he was buried. Piety toward the ancestor has brought him that far. Then the general history of the Upper South as a culture shaped by its frontier beginnings and its long memory of "moody kings" and sorrows left behind can be expected to compensate for the lack of the specific ancestor who as settler had, though "harried from croft and chapel, glen and strath," put Scotland away and "washed the old bitter wars in the salt sea."

The composite voice of all the Andrew Davidsons in Blue-Stocking Hollow is the graybeard of part three of "Hermitage." His teaching is for us all, answering the hunger for direction that had driven the modern Tennessean speaking in the poem to seek out Chestnut Ridge. Though coming 140 years after Andrew Davidson, the lesson is continuous with the first settlers' example: "Peace be to all who keep the wilderness. / Cursed be the child who lets the freehold pass." The homely and routine operation of tradition are summarized in the poem's concluding image of young people coming to the grandsire for blessing and admonition. His lesson in tribal republicanism is continuous with all the history touched upon in this poem, reaching back "to how Ilion fell" and to how "Gael and Gaul, Palatine, Huguenot, came in company" from "our home . . . far across the western wave": a history that runs until "kinsmen's shoulders raised and set / The first log true." According to Donald Davidson, it is a lesson that all of us require and that we can receive if we will—once the power of memory has been restored.

As I said, remembering is everywhere a motif in what Donald Davidson wrote. I will draw a final illustration of Davidson's emphasis on the importance of memory and its role in perpetuating a culture from one of his Vermont poems, "Late Answer: A Civil War Seminar," which has as its probable scene the porch at Endicott, the Davidsons' home at Bread Loaf, where he taught most summers between 1931 and 1964. Once again, it is a Southerner's poem, an answer to questions from an assortment of Yankee colleagues concerning the famous

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"Rebel Yell" of the Confederate soldier and how it sounded to those who first heard it in battle. Yet the point of Davidson's answer is not Southern but generic: the importance of *memoria* to all civilized societies and particularly

To men whose logical eyes might never see
Those living fields I knew where memory
Was not yet shut in many books but strode,
A young Telemachus, the Old Plank Road.

Because they are products of a rationalist society, believing only in "historical process," Dartmouth, Harvard, and Amherst have no patience with Davidson's reference to the conflict of 1861-1865, the central episode in American history, in making some comment on contemporary affairs. Their impatience with his anachronism drives him into silence. He is surprised by their vehemence. Then, perhaps to relieve the tension (and change the subject), one of Davidson's adversaries asks a question about the great war cry of the Southern soldier:

The talk had drifted further than they dreamed
While in the dusk the Adirondacks gleamed,
And all around us in the afterglow
Vermont woods turned to purple, and the slow
Fog-banners mustered out the darkling range.
Then Harvard said:

"Oh, not *that war*! How strange
That you should mix it in! Why, who would talk
Of Sixty-one, or bother to make walk
Old John Brown's ghost that's laid past all debate?
There's no ill-will from here to Scituate.
When I said 'war' I meant of course the late
Unpleasantness. I must say you surprise
Me with these dank Faulknerian memories.
Why should you care for what we've long forgot?
That's not the issue now."
. . . . . .

Two briar pipes glowed at me, and one said:
"We've heard so much—and so much more have
read—
About that cry the Confederate soldiers gave.
The 'Rebel Yell,' you know. And yet to save
My life I could not confidently cite
One decent account of what it sounded like.
The books all disagree. Now, won't you tell
Just what it was—or, better, *give* the yell."

The Tennessee poet's reaction to both the inquiry and the passion directed against him at the beginning of "Late Answer: A Civil War Seminar" concerns how northerners might do well to consult *memoria* themselves. He suggests an immediate visit by all present to a Vermont monument "to the Union dead," an obelisk to be found "not far below" Bread Loaf, near Cornwall Village, where Truman Lane is remembered as having died in the Wilderness north of Richmond and Stillman Smith as having fallen at Donelson, as did Captain Samson at Cold Harbor. But first Davidson delays responding so as to consider whether there is any point in answering. Then come the four lines on memory not shut in books quoted just above, and a rejoinder quickly fills the poet's mind, a speech concerning sorrow, mourning, brotherhood, *and* memory—how memory is nurtured or restored; how it is rooted in human nature:

"The whispering in the marrow spreads to the brain;
The remembering heart carries it round again
Till it beats in the throat, the lips, the weeping eye
And is born at last in a blazing wordless outcry."

Once more Davidson mentions ancient memories, portions of an identity that he and the New Englanders share. As is so often the case in his verse, he calls up Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse images. What tradition means to him is, as in *The Tall Men* and "Hermitage," clearly suggested. The northern scholars who would "debate by night" have forgotten to mourn, forgotten how we started on the long journey over "the viking wave." They consider not at all

"Far-off kinsman dead or a roof burning;
Yet a burning roof, kin dead long ago,
If you could weep, would give you right to know
The sound of valor where it dwells with sorrow
Or, chilled by reason, hides in the deep marrow.
Did you hear it rousing once at Saratoga?
Or when the Highland dead at Ticonderoga
Lay naked to the stars? Or when the blood
Of Jennie McCrea cried out, you understood?

"We mourned with you then in brotherhood,
And I'll weep with you now for those whose names
Burn on your monuments like altar flames."

At this point we are prepared for the powerful directive conclusion that I summarized above:

"Come, let no darkness daunt us. Let us go
Where Cornwall Village dreams not far below
And on their obelisk read how Truman Lane
Died in the Wilderness; Stillman Smith was slain
At Donelson; and at Cold Harbor
Captain Samson. Then, strangely, Alva Barlow
'Hung by guerrillas!'—the stone does not say where.
Perhaps it's not a monument's affair.
But I'll weep—even for Alva—if you can weep
For him, for all, for Southern boys asleep
Like these your fathers may somewhere have known.

"We, too, have names that blaze on mouldering stone
And I have seen men's tears fall where they slept
And heard a shouting while I wept,
A century off yet louder in my ear
Than all that's so much magnified and near.

"Ah, Truman Lane, you heard it well as I!—
That rage of belief, the tears, the mystery
Quickened the flags of men right willing to die.
Only such men could tell what once could be,
Hear what we hear, see what we see."

In completing this extraordinary poem, Davidson treats once more of images and acts, not of abstract principles. Mourning, of Northern or Southern dead, Civil War dead,

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Highlanders killed at Ticonderoga, or Jennie McCrea murdered by the Iroquois during the French and Indian War, will do the turn and make the past present for those who seek it out. Needless to say, those who are thus "prepared" will be able to hear the "Rebel Yell"—and to imagine such outcries and shouting and the feelings they reflect—that "rage of belief, the tears, the mystery," better than "all that's so much magnified and near."

In "Late Answer: A Civil War Seminar," memory is treated not as a distinctively Southern faculty but as precisely the opposite: what a Southern poet believes that *all* Americans require if their civilization is to retain anything like continuity, a sense of its own origins in the colonial experience and of all the unfolding that has brought it into its deracinated present. Nations of men that neglect to cultivate the faculty turn into what Allen Tate describes as "provincials in time" and are thus rendered so individual and separate as to be forced into recapitulating the human experience from its start when they arise each morning and greet the day. For the only alternative, says this formula, is mere nostalgia. And it will not suit modernity or postmodernity to begin politics there. In this context, mourning is expected to foster memory, which in a practical sense is quite plausible. Mourning results in "historic empathy," as we recall what we have lost. The love between parents, children, and grandchildren is the basis of all tradition. That and the affection for tested principles and familiar, friendly places and ways connected with our nurture—a political philosophy recommended in Davidson's *The Attack on Leviathan: Essays on Regionalism and Nationalism in the United States*. By this matrix is fostered a reconstitutive memory that is not "shut in many books." Davidson recommends it to all as a basis for the pious life—not just to Southerners or Americans. For he knows from his careful study of the history of poetry that nothing can replace the work of *memoria* when there is a long continuity of life led according to a particular style—another aspect of the "freehold" cherished by the old man, the memory-keeper, whose recommendation concludes Davidson's "Hermitage."

In his essay "Yeats and the Centaur," Donald Davidson discusses the Irish poet's image of modern art as a centaur, "finding in the popular lore its back and strong legs." But the rest of the centaur, Davidson insists, is another matter. It is an unnatural beast, a hybrid given to unattractive or monstrous behavior. And if one part of it is strong in back and legs, the other component has no business being attached to that strength. Yeats knew old Ireland, its lore and literature. But he also knew and took seriously William Blake, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, all sorts of occultism, mythography, the theory of automatic writing, and the Society of the Golden Dawn. The difference between the man of tradition (the voice of Irish memory who asked "Who goes with Fergus?") and the fellow who wanted to "sail to Byzantium"—along with the way those two sometimes appeared together in a single Yeats poem—Davidson emphasized in teaching the great Irish poet in his class on modern poetry. This difference is also mentioned in his poem "Meditation on Literary Fame":

> Yeats, consorting with moon-demons, heard
> Images only, clutched at the abstract Bird
> Of charred philosophy until he lost
> Usheen, whom once he knew, and his dear land,
> And all the Celtic host.

Which of course says the same thing that Davidson maintained in his Yeats essay.

Once the poet's relation to his tradition is broken by the private enthusiasms that have so much interested modern artists (who wish to think of themselves as high priests or aristocrats not as memory-keepers), it becomes difficult to address anything but the coterie that fosters these isolating enthusiasms and encourages his alienation. Because of what he thought about memory, Davidson stood at as great a distance as possible from the modern stereotype of the alienated artist. Yeats (whose achievement Davidson honored) both did and did not assume that posture. The calculus of memory pulls the artist back and reconciles him to an essentially inherited role, to a world where some things are merely given (but not what we do with them), a world of mystery and manners. But the old patterns in the great quilt of life tell a true story—of our limits and of what is predictable:

> Happy the land where men hold dear
> Myth that is truest memory,
> Prophecy that is poetry.

That knowledge, too, is part of the "freehold" to which we either hold fast or lose our way. C

Eurocentric Rag

by Robert Mezey

I make a lot of money and I have a perfect tan;
I wear Armani clothing, I'm a very fancy Dan;
I've dominated women ever since the world began—
Yes, I'm phallocentric, logocentric, Eurocentric Man!

Oppression is my favorite sport, I play it with élan,
And I scorn the weak and womanish, the sloth, the also-ran;
Let them forage for their dinner from my silver garbage can
And thank their generous benefactor, Eurocentric Man.

I've conquered everybody from Peru to Hindustan
And I make 'em speak my language, though they very rarely can;
I'm the king, the pope, the CEO, the chieftain of the clan—
Yes, I'm phallologo, logophallo, Eurocentric Man!

The beauty with the hothouse grapes, the young boy with the fan
Are only minor luxuries, like my Silver Cloud sedan;
I bet you're very curious about my Master Plan,
For I'm your nightmare, haunting, taunting, Eurocentric Man!

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Writer and Community

by Fred Chappell

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Most writers feel honored by literary prizes—in the way I feel so honored by the award of the T.S. Eliot prize—whether they accept them or not. At the same time, many writers share the wish that their vocation could be carried on anonymously. By the time they have become suitably proficient at their art and have established a proper reputation among their peers and critics, they are no longer compelled by personal glory. They have often tired a little of the notion of fame. A decade or two of essaying the spectacular but exhausting Parnassian slope will do some serious damage to self-pride. This vanity is then fairly annihilated when we raise our eyes to observe how much farther up the ridges our ancestors have established themselves and with what ease they seem to have done so.

The advantages of anonymity are attractive. In the first place, if a critic had no name to point his cruelly barbed shafts at, the guilty writer could escape with a minimum of public embarrassment. He would still writhe and whimper in private, but at least his mother would not have to know the truth; he could choose some other anonymous work, one that had received only praise that rang like silver bells, and claim that one as his own. The other advantage of anonymity is that it would prevent scrutiny of the writer's personal life.

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I do not propose to talk at length about the private lives of authors; they really do not bear much looking into. If writers were as well-known as film stars, and if the tabloids were interested in any dead people besides Elvis, the *National Enquirer* could fill its pages for years to come with stories of the follies and deviltries of scribblers. I could contribute quite a few myself—except I know that I would receive payment in kind, doubled and redoubled, stories of my own idiocies and misdemeanors that I could not deny. I suppose that writers' lives are not generally more sordid or dishonorable than those of some of their friends and neighbors, but I have to tell you that I would not care to have mine examined in public. I would feel more embarrassed, and with pretty good reason, than those sexually confused people who appear so compulsively on the television talk shows. Yet finally, I believe that a writer's private life ought to be made public. I have always tried to share the conviction of my compeers that one's work is what counts, that one's private life is irrelevant to his artistic aspirations and accomplishments, but I no longer feel entirely justified in doing so.

Please understand that I am not advocating that writers uncloset great bundles of their dirty linen and begin to soap it up. I am only trying to approach the vexing problem of the writer's relationship to his community. I believe very strongly that a writer has a duty to belong to his community and to join in actively with its concerns as time and opportunity permit. And if one of the stages toward communal acceptance is the admission and demonstration that writers are only poor mis-

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erable sinners like the rest of humanity, then it is a necessary step to take and a small price to pay. Such admission and demonstration may result in public benefit.

After all, many of the virtues that sustain a writer's work are public virtues as well as private ones. I speak of honesty, steadfastness, perseverance, thoughtfulness, charity, understanding, love of justice and of beauty, patience, intelligence, forgiveness, and good cheer. Any literary work will more clearly approach excellence the more it can encompass these qualities. If the writer expects that these qualities will substantiate and adorn his phrases, why should they not substantiate and adorn his or her life? If the writer knows that criticism will scrutinize the literary work for these qualities and judge it by their presence or absence, why shouldn't he expect that his life shall be examined and judged in the same way?

Probably it is because the writer also knows that the methods and instruments that are brought to bear upon a literary text or a work of art are inadequate when it comes to judging human lives and personalities. These are unstable, always changing, always influenced by circumstance. The third baseman's error in the second inning makes him a goat, his home run in the ninth makes him a hero; a besotted melancholic may become a great military leader and then a less-than-great President of the United States.

The work of art, however, is a finished product; it does not change. True, critical judgments of it shall change, and often quite radically, over a period of time, but the work itself in its essential nature shall not change. It is what it is, now and forever, and its critics necessarily stand apart from it. But those who know you and me well enough to judge our lives are so closely involved with us, so directly affected by us, that no objectivity can be gained; they are biased for us or against us; they contribute to community consensus about us.

What might we gain by putting a writer's life on trial along with his or her work? "Use each of us as he deserves," inquires Shakespeare, "and who shall 'scape whipping?" Well, we know the answer to that question. The writer in particular comes away with deep purple welts. But that is the point, after all. If we can place, for example, the uncanny prescience of Edgar Allan Poe's fiction alongside his broken and unhappy life, we shall the more readily appreciate what he accomplished. The life we may fairly judge as a dark and melancholy ruin, but against it the fitful lightning strokes of his genius only shine the more electrically. I know I need not rehearse for you the personal failings of Thomas Wolfe or Ernest Hemingway or William Faulkner—or of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Jonathan Swift, Shelley, Byron, Dickens, Ben Jonson, and Samuel Johnson. And I don't need to remark that their books escape or overcome these failings—and shine the more brightly for doing so.

Let us keep in mind, though, that their books are still part of their personal lives. Writers produce their paragraphs in the privacy of their studies and take from the more secret resources of their personalities the materials that go into the making of their books. And maybe it is there that a certain *public* balance is struck. Perhaps the courage that his contemporaries sometimes found lacking in Turgenev's personal life went into the composition of his novel *Fathers and Sons*. Perhaps much of the bully-boy bluster that was part of Hemingway's makeup is quietened by the laconic stoicism of his best pages.

Maybe the writer sets down, knowingly or unknowingly, as *personal* goals what he or she envisions as honorable possibilities of action and thought in a world that generally seems designed purposely to maim and sully honor, to delimit and defeat the highest of human aspirations, and to darken to midnight our most luminous hopes. What can make the writer important in a world that looks like a channel wasteland is the fact that he inhabits this hell along with the rest of us and yet must still be capable of attaining to a vision of a better manner of existence and of articulating this vision. The serious writer soon discovers what his or her duties are in circumstances wide or narrow: to produce the very best work that it is possible to produce and to lead the most upright life that can be led.

But then he soon discovers that both these duties are impossible of fulfillment, and that the second of them, the steadily virtuous private life, is the more impossible. That fact makes it all the more urgent, so he fancies, for him to bring the quality of his work up to the highest standard. If in his or her private life the writer is fated to suffer the ordinary failings of his brother and sister humans, perhaps the production of a more perfect work of art—one with broader and more subtle implications than its rivals promise, with more acute perceptions and a glossier polish—will help to balance out the accounts.

It must be one of the silliest of notions, this idea that one might make up for personal moral deficiencies by means of artistic performance. It is as if someone said, "Well, I can't seem to make myself stop embezzling money, but my rose garden is the most colorful on the block." Yet I believe that many artists indulge in this sort of account-juggling. In fact, I think that many of us do, that we often say to ourselves, "I'm aware that I have not been the best mother to my children that I might have been—or the best son to my parents—or the best servitor of my religious principles, but I have always turned in an honest day's work at the office; I am very good at my job." This is a common hypocrisy; W.B. Yeats remarked it deftly in a dark little poem called "The Choice":

> The intellect of man is forced to choose
> Perfection of the life or of the work,
> And if it choose the latter must refuse
> A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.

I don't quite agree with the great poet's statement; I think that he puts the case too dogmatically and that the alternatives are not quite so stark as he makes out. An artist who dedicates himself to his work at the expense of his moral life does not necessarily lose his hope of heaven. But when he uses his art as an excuse for his shortcomings he plunges into the mire of hypocrisy—just as the rest of us do when we blame our personal failures on the pressures of our professions. On this point I can speak—sorrowfully—from my own experience.

But the difficulties only begin there. Even if the artist is willing to take a dangerous chance, to throw his most strenuous efforts into art and not into his personal life, further impossibilities await. When I spoke before of the artist's ability, and duty, to attain to vision in the midst of debilitating daily circumstances, I simplified the case. An artist actually is required to hold in mind two visions; they should be identical, but usually they are only complementary. In practice they may even seem opposed at times.

The artist must possess first and last a vision of moral victory. It need not be a completely detailed vision of a utopian society or a picture of a perfect individual life, but it must be a vision, explicit or implicit, of how things would be, in the specific

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set of circumstances that comprise his artistic material, if our better instincts triumphed over our worse. If the artist is a writer, he or she doesn't have to outline the results of this moral victory anywhere in the pages of the poem or story at hand. But it has to be kept in mind because it supplies the sunshine backdrop that makes the foreground battle of dark shadows—that is, the meat of the story—visible and meaningful. Without a pretty clear notion of the ideal, the depiction of what we accept as real is a waste of time, no matter how accurate and meticulous and convincing the execution.

This fact comprises the artist's first artistic failure, one that is almost guaranteed. Our images of vice are well defined, dramatic, sharp-edged, and energetic. And why not? We live in vice, all of us; we are handy to its smells and tastes, its appetites and brutalities. Our visions of virtue, however, are pallid and dropsical, puny and naive. When we paint an urban utopia, it turns out looking like a plush hotel lobby; when we draw a rural one, it looks like an expensive golf resort. Twenty-four karat boulevards and a mastery of harp technique: these are our common images for heaven. Dante was able to depict a paradise made up of infinite gradations of light, of the kinds and degrees of virtue that described God's goodness; these were immediately apprehendable by the senses, the mind, and the soul. Yet it is that poet's images of hell that most people recall. In fact, most readers of Dante never venture further than his *Inferno*. If Dante's paradise has not fixed firmly in the minds of most of us—and it has had 600 years to do so—how shall the contemporary writer successfully portray a vision of the ideal, his faith being so much shakier than Dante's, his intellect so much less powerful, and his talent dwarfish in comparison?

Only a very few artists have been able to offer a convincing delineation of moral triumph, and I have a doleful feeling that none of them is alive at this hour. This then is the first certain failure the experienced writer knows he must face: the inability to outline with any confidence the figure of the ideal. And without this foundation his work, no matter how expertly fashioned, will fall short of his hopes.

The other failure is imperfect execution. An artist may throw his whole life into the completion of his work, disregarding comfort and safety, careless of future security, reckless of the physical and emotional and financial costs. He may labor at his project almost every minute of his working days and sleepless nights. He may search the planet for materials, hunt the schools and scour the libraries for knowledge. He may build and unbuild and begin again; he will fashion and refashion; he will pray unceasingly. But in the end the finished project comes so far short of his dream of it that it looks like a squalid mud hut situated next to the Parthenon. And then—the worst horror!—the imagined Parthenon fades away like the echo of a watchman's whistled tune in a midnight warehouse and the actual artwork, the ugly little mud hut, takes its place forever.

So let the artist's personal failures be known; let them stand, almost as perverse monuments, as reminders of what he actually desired in the way of an upright life. Works of art remain as monuments in the very same way: they will continue to exist as monuments that only suggest possibilities; they are mere ungainly sad remnants of the dream of grace and beauty that had to lodge at last in a shape not so graceful and not so beautiful. The artist allows them to continue to burden our cluttered world because they point to something beyond themselves; they point toward what might have been. And they suggest what we might have been, and might yet be, if, like the artist, we are willing to unbuild and then build again. c

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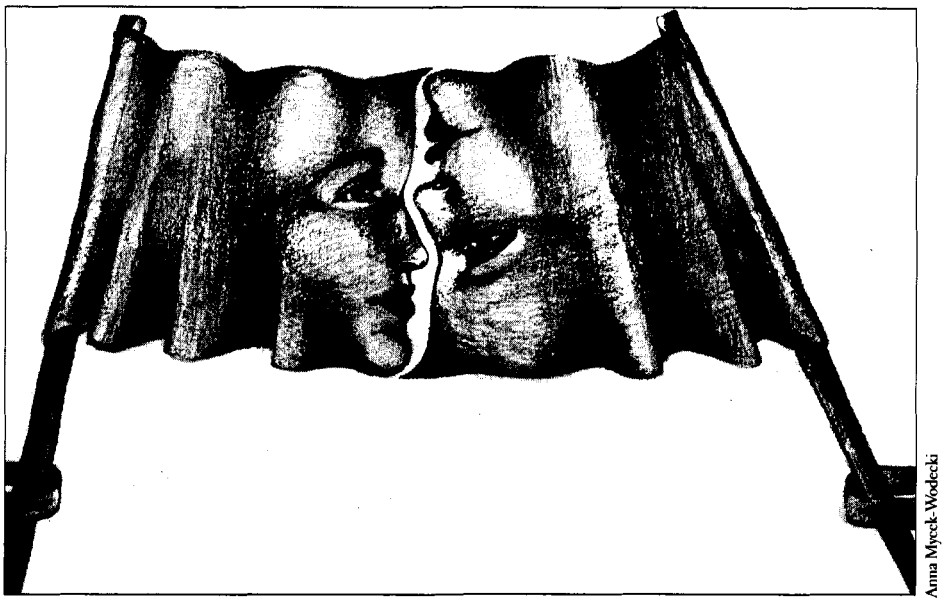
Showdown at Gettysburg

by J.O. Tate



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Sitting through a showing of the recent film *Gettysburg* in a multiplex theater amid the abstract sprawl of suburban Yankeedom was somehow an unnerving experience. I don't mean to say that the movie itself was off-putting or unsuccessful, though come to think of it, there were a few awkward moments here and there. No, the hard part was being in the presence of other Americans as the movie was shown. There seemed to be more at stake in that representation of history than the field where it was fought and filmed.

Gettysburg is a good movie as such, and as a movie about the Civil War, one of the best ever made, if not the best. It represents the contribution of many hundreds of reenactors; it is in effect a sort of pageant, a filmed reenactment. The figure of 30 million dollars has been cited as Ted Turner's investment in the project, and as you might expect, the footage (even longer than the four-plus hours of the theatrical release) is supposed to become a cable TV extravaganza and video release later on. It's fine with me if Ted Turner gets his money back. After all, *Gettysburg* is no ignoble undertaking, especially when compared with 90 percent of the trash that's released today. It's graphically striking and well worth seeing.

Jeff Daniels has been widely praised for his portrayal of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, "the Hero of Little Round Top," and rightly so. The heroic presentation of such a man, however, suggests numerous contemporary ironies that are part of the problematic "success" of the film. Moreover, the emphasis on Chamberlain and on the extreme left of the Union position skews our perspective of the battle. I suppose that Chamberlain is to a degree overemphasized for dramatic reasons, as a counterweight to the striking personalities of the Confederate brass; that problem is presented to us as much by history as by the screenplay. Still, much more could have been done with Winfield Scott Hancock, and nothing was made of Dan Sickles and his famous blunder, or the consequential loss of his leg.

The dominant presence in the film is a passive one: Tom Berenger as James Longstreet spends a lot of screen time dragging on a cigar and listening to the expostulations of others. His hair and beard are so false and heavy that he looks like a transgalactic alien from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and his immaculate uniform seems to say, "General Lee, I've come straight from the dry cleaner's." Though the battle was fought in the heat of early July, this Longstreet never removes a jacket, opens a collar button, or loosens a tie in that blistering sunlight. The thought of just how much anti-perspirant Longstreet used at Gettysburg had never crossed my mind before (a great deal, apparently), but then we all have much to learn from the reenactors.

As Robert E. Lee, Martin Sheen is an effective surprise. He conveys Lee's achieved simplicity and intimidating perfection of manner, a composure somehow innate, willed, mild, severe, aristocratic, military, and Virginian all at once. My complaint about Sheen is his lack not only of a waist but also of much else needed to evoke Lee's physical grace. Perhaps elevator shoes and fewer peanuts with those Heinekens would have helped.

But I don't really mean to carp. *Gettysburg* is good enough so that its flaws—an unbalanced screenplay, little blood, no sweat, few tears—are actually apparent. I suppose that it just doesn't matter much whether I or anyone else particularly liked the representation, say, of J.E.B. Stuart or A.P. Hill or John Bell Hood or Lewis Armistead or Richard Garnett or George Pickett. No indeed, because apart from its quite considerable cinematic virtues, *Gettysburg* is significant not as a movie but as a rather astounding phenomenon on the cultural scene. We behold Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg, but outside that focus there's the mind-numbing juxtaposition with all that has replaced them in the national consciousness, such as Senators Kennedy and Biden, Beavis and Butt-head, and what have you. So the representation of the Civil War as something very like "the last war fought between gentlemen" is surprising in our ahistorical, absurdist context. Nineteenth-century elo-

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quence is all the more striking for the implied contrast with the dumbed-down discourse of the contemporary standard, whether in the multiplex or on cable. It is actually shocking to see the Civil War represented in historically sound language, ideas, and motives, rather than in some rigidly ideological reduction. Precious little in American culture since the 60's has prepared us for the incredible truths presented by *Gettysburg*—a vision that comes as a slap in the face and a wake-up call to the national memory. Thanks, director Ronald F. Maxwell—we needed that.

Maxwell's screenplay was developed from Michael Shaara's novel *The Killer Angels*, and it is both appropriate and necessary to say here that Shaara's vision was developed from history. What shock is there for us in thinking that Longstreet might have been more right than Lee 130 years ago? The shock of *Gettysburg* is not the rehash of strategy or the experience of the battle—it is the reminder of a lost world and a betrayed culture. It is a measure of what we have lost, of what too many of us have never known we had, of the price we pay for induced amnesia, and of the alienation and mendacity required to maintain the present regime of inversion.

Not all of us needed such a reminder, of course. Some are like Elvis Presley in one of his early songs: we forgot to remember to forget. Civil War buffs, muzzle-loading enthusiasts, and historically minded people are some of those who, in various ways, remember and commemorate authentic America. But by and large, a cultural hegemony preoccupied with radically restructuring the nation's laws and lobotomizing our treasury of memory by promulgating a repotted history; a masscult obsessed with extracting money from consumers who are habituated to pornographic and other fantasies accompanied by the druggy shake, rattle, and roll of electronic "music"; and enforcers of politically correct substitutes for knowledge and thought who police the academic world—none of these have prepared us for the experience of a film that in 1993 largely deals with Confederate anxieties and presents without irony extollments of the virtues of the families of Virginia.

The seeming novelty of such assertions, and the sight of so many freshly laundered Confederate battle flags (no bullet holes or bloodstains on those banners), seems incongruous in a larger context so distorted that only just this past summer, the U.S. Senate actually voted to refuse a patent to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, endorsing the view of Senator Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois that the sight of that same flag was "painful." The Senate joined her in "putting a stake through the heart of this Dracula"—the something that kept rising from the grave that apparently is American history itself. Ms. Moseley-Braun's ineptly rehearsed hissy-fit was so stultifying in its moronism that no one thought to ask whether the Stars and Stripes might also evoke painful memories, since it denoted (among other painful things) a slaveholding nation for many more years than the Confederate flag represented anything. Neither was anyone heard to inquire whether a painful memory for some justified a rule of censorship for others; for if it did, then perhaps even the cross—whether painfully representing for some the crucifixion of the perfect man or painfully constituting for others an object of resentment—might also be rejected by our sensitive senators. (One implication of the movie *Gettysburg* is to remind us that men, even senators in some cases, used to be made of sterner stuff.)

Well, no sooner was the tantrum concluded than Senators Boxer and Feinstein of California, Metzenbaum of Ohio, and Heflin of Alabama were with improbable spontaneity hugging the senator from Illinois in front of the television cameras, congratulating her for her historic contribution, which was—they got quite worked up on this point—one only a woman could have made. Strictly speaking, of course, that was a remarkable thing to say about a deliberate insult to a ladies' service organization—one that had been respected by the Senate for nearly a century.

Perhaps some senator should not only view *Gettysburg* but also study the extent of national, not sectional, involvement in commemorating the virtues of certain Confederates, if not the "Rebellion" itself. Such a leader might also examine how Jefferson Davis (who declared, "Sovereigns never rebel") and Robert E. Lee got their citizenship back during the Carter administration—the late Robert Penn Warren wrote a good study of Davis as an American. That solon should note the names of the U.S.S. *Robert E. Lee*, the U.S.S. *Stonewall Jackson*, Fort Bragg, Fort Hood, Fort A.P. Hill, etc., as well as certain U.S. stamps and coins like the Old Stone Mountain half-dollar, and so on. Such a lawgiver might then understand that such acknowledgments were more than political payoffs—they were recognitions of notable American soldiers, West Point graduates all, some veterans of the Mexican War (of painful memory, the NAFTA and the immigration policy of its day), who somehow served in the grim period before the Army's appalling sexism and homophobia were chastened. And the flag that these men fought for was, during the War Between the States, often that transfixing image which I hesitate to mention lest the citation of reality cause offense to anyone, especially to the junior senator from the great state of Illinois.

Some may wonder why it is so important to the Senate now to undo the reunification sealed by the Senate 90-odd years ago. President McKinley pointedly paid homage to Confederate heroism, as a capstone to the victory in the Spanish-American War, and offered federal help in caring for Confederate graves on Northern soil. Two Confederate generals, Fitzhugh Lee and Joseph Wheeler, served in blue in that war—a point that was nationally noted. When Congress voted to return captured Confederate flags in 1905, it thereby acknowledged Southern honor. Other indicators of a gentlemanly reconciliation in that day included the celebration of Lee conducted by the younger Charles Francis Adams, brother of Henry and Brooks Adams, son of Lincoln's minister to England, grandson of John Quincy Adams, and great-grandson of John and Abigail Adams. In a related gesture, Charles E. Stowe, son of "the little lady who started the big war," repudiated abolitionism in a speech in 1911.

Confederate Memorial Day, complete with painful flags, was observed at Arlington *National* Cemetery beginning in 1903—appropriately so when you consider in whose front yard that burial ground is located, and how it was acquired. In 1913, over 50,000 veterans—mostly Union, of course—gathered at Gettysburg for their 50th anniversary and a rather authentic if enfeebled reenactment of Pickett's Charge. They also heard a speech by a Southern-born President—one who, like many another citizen, was later to admire the film *Birth of a Nation*.

The powerful medium of the movies was used to promote the myth of American unity. Owen Wister in *The Virginian* (1902) instituted in the popular mind an acknowledgment of Southern virtue that had many echoes in popular culture, particularly in Hollywood films. John Ford had the most pow-

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erful and inclusive vision of the American past (in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* and *The Horse Soldiers* and elsewhere), but he was far from alone. The North/South conflict is played out in many a Western. In George Stevens's *Shane*, for example, the blowhard Southerner "Stonewall" Torrey is done in by the hired killer, Wilson. When the eponymous hero wants a settlement, he calls Wilson the worst thing he can think of: a low-down lying Yankee. After such words, one of them must die. As far back as we can conceive of our country (and even for Yankees like Herman Melville, Henry James, and Henry Adams, as C. Vann Woodward reminded us), the Southerner has been a necessary part of the American imagination.

Now between you, me, and the newel post, I'd hate to bring up the point that the Confederate battle flag was just that: the banner of an army, and not the only one. (A vexillary excursus would assert that the cross of St. Andrew, the heraldic ordinarily known as a saltire, has been or is found on the flags of Ireland, Scotland, Great Britain, Spain, Jersey, Biscay, South Africa, Russia, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi.) The flag is *not* to be confused with "the Bonnie Blue Flag" or "the Stars and Bars"—flags of the nation. And if that's too demanding, then you didn't hear it from me. Yet for that reason and others, the recent flap about the Georgia state flag was quite absurd: the revisionists unknowingly wanted to change the part of the flag that repeated the motif of the battle flag with a pre-1956 version alluding to the Stars and Bars! The people of that state, ignoring the posturing of their governor, preferred to let things be. There have been, of course, similar controversies about Civil War memorials and flags, in attempts to rewrite or efface history in the name of some heightened consciousness or other.

But just as even in our country it is not absolutely necessary to choose our national leaders because of manifest lack of appropriate character, neither is it even in a postindustrial mass democracy necessarily impossible to make distinctions or maintain informed awareness—*Gettysburg* suggests that much. Similarly, the series *Civil War Journal* that runs on the Arts and Entertainment cable channel has in one recent episode devoted to "Banners of Glory" shown just how well a contemporary medium can serve the public interest and even present in context the Forbidden Image for which so many died. Even on television, 1861-65 is not to be confused with its own centennial, during which cheap copies of the Confederate battle flag were waved by unlettered and angry people resisting the civil rights movement and the federal enforcement of unwelcome laws.

The late Walker Percy, in his *The Last Gentleman*, wrote definitively of the *déjà vu* caused by the degrading replication of the Civil War as a farce, not a tragedy. He also indicated elsewhere that when the flag was furled at Appomattox, no flag had ever been defended by better men—yet when the same flag was picked up by unworthy people or reproduced as a tourist's trinket, the icon had to be let go. He had much truth on his side—but his truth depended on his personal virtue and ironic intelligence, his extensive knowledge of the South, his aristocratic heritage, and his Christian conviction. How many Americans or senators are now fortified by such a combination? Even repudiation must rest on a proper foundation. In any case, Percy's irony today might well suggest that much harm as well as good has come from the civil rights movement and that a final demonstration of the probity and wisdom of the federal enforcement of anything was recently shown to those sinister Branch Davidian women and children. Attorney General Reno's claim of "full responsibility" was—perhaps by some bureaucratic oversight?—unaccompanied by her resignation, but then again life without honor must today be our constant study. Janet Reno, as notable a "role model" as she is an Attorney General, often came to mind during my viewing of *Gettysburg* (as did other members of the Clinton administration), because what life with honor was like *in our country* was demonstrated not so much in that movie as in that battle by the federal Colonel Chamberlain of the 20th Maine and by Buford and Reynolds and Hancock, not to mention their Confederate counterparts.

Yet those Confederates and their flags were more than a presence in *Gettysburg*—they dominated the movie as they failed to dominate that field. Somehow the story is theirs—a salient part of American history is theirs. The movie, like the battle, challenges and stimulates our imagination, showing our country to have been more wonderful and terrible, beautiful and mysterious, tender and cruel, idealistic and violent, selfish and sacrificing than anyone can ever fully know, yet which not to know is not to know ourselves. Because Lee lost the battle and Lincoln gave his address there, Gettysburg has been a synecdoche for the Civil War, and for the fate of the nation, since the smoke cleared—but it remains a deeply ambivalent symbol. The movie implies the tantalizing might-have-been that gives the battle its significance: if a mysterious dispensation had gone the other way . . . and why did it not? The film captures the freely determined fatedness (Longstreet a Starbuck, Lee an Ahab), the creation of a future that is now our past. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges V: 20).

Even the triumphalist view of that war, not to mention the tragic one, requires the Confederate presence. The South is a necessary part of the American story; a precipitating generator of our polity, our national mythology, our cuisine, our humor; a disproportionate share of our finest literature—even as "The Lost Cause." Massachusetts and Minnesota *need* South Carolina and Mississippi; the North *requires* the South (as it does the West); the Union literally *absorbed* unto itself the Secession by an epic violence as mental as it was physical. Who says "the U.S.A." says "the Revolution" and the Second Revolution, "the Civil War" (for our Revolution was a Civil War and our Civil War was a Revolution). Who says "the Civil War" necessarily conjures its imagery and notables. There can be no Grant without a Lee, no Sherman without a Johnston, no Lincoln without a Davis, no Custer or Sheridan without Stuart and Shelby, and no Gettysburg without Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg. There can be no monuments at the courthouse squares of towns in Ohio and Rhode Island without those other northern-facing monuments in Georgia and Alabama. There is no history without conflict, no honor without pain, no courage without fear, no victory without bloodshed, no contest without cruelty, no glory without sorrow, no irony without consciousness, and no memory without substance.

Gettysburg and *Civil War Journal* remind us that in spite of political grandstanding, commercialism, and public relations, though a Confederate soldier was not a federal one, he was still, after all, an American. He was sometimes quite memorably the best soldier in the history of our country, often the most pious, and usually the least destructive of private property. Though his battle flags were mostly surrendered, they were images of fidelity and independence and are not to be treated as images of

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opprobrium or as the moral equivalent of the swastika. That flag is no more to be shunned than is the old "Spirit of '76" flag, the flag of the Republic of Texas, or my own favorite, the rattlesnake with the motto "Don't Tread On Me." Anyway, I certainly hope that no senator of whatever race, gender, or orientation will suggest that nowadays something more like a red flag with perhaps a gold hammer and sickle or maybe even a lavender flag with a purple charge card and a pink condom would be a more appropriate national banner than the one whose history and resonance—because of pain and cognitive difficulty—we are presently arranging to forget. Or that the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Colonial Dames, the Order of the Cincinnati, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, or the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites might be singled out for stoning.

As the Disney empire proceeds with its 3,000-acre historical theme park six miles from Manassas, I'm sure that the nation's youth are, like other Americans, keenly aware that General Joshua L. Chamberlain, who won a Congressional Medal of Honor at Gettysburg, was himself asked to receive on behalf of Grant the formal surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on April 12, 1865. The Confederates stacked their arms and folded their flags in tears—some of their decimated regiments seemed composed of flags, not men. Chamberlain, later governor of Maine, president of Bowdoin College, and an accomplished rhetorician, composed a set piece called *The Passing of the Armies* in which he paid handsome tribute to the men whom he had fought for years and by whom he had been gravely wounded. The nation's youth used to read and recite the piece, written by a Yankee gentleman of the old school. He never scorned those men or their flags, but read the roll call of their units and their history as they passed by, assuming that everyone knew or should know the names of A.P. Hill and James Longstreet and John Bell Hood, as well as what they did. The more glory that was accorded to the gallant defeated, then how much more to the victors!

The North won Gettysburg and the war, but somehow the history as living memory was let go along with the values that made it worth remembering. If Farnsworth's Charge at Gettysburg had been a Southern disaster, it would not have been forgotten—it does not appear in the movie. Neither does the astounding mutual destruction of Pettigrew's 26th North Carolina and the 24th Michigan, at the climax of the first day on McPherson's Ridge. The Yankees lost over 80 percent of their men; the Secesh even more. One of Pettigrew's companies lost 100 percent; another had two unhit out of 83. Pettigrew's adjutant found the wounded howling in the woods and foaming at the mouth. Those were the kind of men who contested the battle of Gettysburg—on both sides. Today in Mogadishu, Colonel Aidid does not seem to be worried that he will have to tangle with such determination. Is he wrong?

In Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery, there is (or was, if any demagogues heard about it) an impressively painful memorial to the hard-luck Army of Tennessee in the form of a wounded lion, modeled on "the Lion of Lucerne," which commemorates the Swiss Guard that died for the Bourbons of France. Such an acknowledgment, if no more, is still appropriate in Atlanta and in Lucerne. When the French attempted to celebrate the bicentennial of their Revolution, many in the Vendée and elsewhere begged to differ, and for good reason. William Faulkner, who entitled one of the stories that make up *The Unvanquished* "Vendée," also let us know that the past is not dead. It's not even past.

The startling images of *Gettysburg* reaffirm that assertion, even though the Library of Congress recently withheld *Birth of a Nation* from an exhibition of great American films for the usual pained reasons. Such national folly says perhaps less about our country than it does about our leadership, but we can hardly hope to come to terms with our history if we cannot bear to behold even the history of our movies.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy will doubtless continue their service toward sustaining the memory of courage and devotion, in spite of the insult directed at them. The South, or what's left of it, may continue to cultivate the rituals of memory. But one larger question is whether, in the national mythology, the South will be accorded the place it receives in history and in *Gettysburg*, or whether it will instead be confined to the role of scapegoat—and recyclable comic relief, as in the latest version of *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Jed and Jethro can sure help you forget a lot of things in a hurry, but somehow they just don't have the style of Lee and Longstreet and the potent yeomanry that the Yankees weren't so afraid of—then. It's reassuring to believe that all Southerners are as coarse and stupid as Senator Heflin appears to be, rather than to wonder why a man of Lee's stature and rectitude would. . . . But good heavens, we hardly have time for such disturbing thoughts while we are busy insisting that the Constitution guarantees so many things it unaccountably doesn't state and that so many things it does say are unconstitutional.

The larger question is whether our nation can have an honest account of its past, and retain it. Henry Steele Commager entitled his indispensable two-volume anthology *The Blue and the Gray*, not *The Blue and the Unmentionable*. Refusing the chance to trivialize his own life, Booker T. Washington did not entitle his famous autobiography *Up From a Painful Condition*. Yet today there is pressure to change the names of schools and other institutions that have been called after those vile Southern slaveholders—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison—as though we were learning to will the destruction of the national memory rather than its maintenance and to exclude the Southern roots of our freedom from acknowledgment rather than to honor them. Ignorance of history and terror of truth do not preserve liberty or national coherence any more than they represent sound education or public policy. After all, if we need Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony in the national pantheon (and we do), there must also be room in the multicultural amplitude for Lee and Longstreet—and their flag as well.

The kind of future we are liable to get without much sense of a past is rapidly coalescing. It will be determined by the college sophomores and juniors I have encountered who have never heard of John Brown, of his raid on Harpers Ferry, or of the song about his body moldering in the grave. Since neither the government nor the educational establishment seems interested in promoting awareness of American history without anachronism, private interests and contemporary technology of the kind that produced *Gettysburg* may restore to those quaint people who identify with this country and speak English what formerly was considered to be their heritage—a vision of their past heroic enough to be memorable, outrageous enough to be glorious, conflicted enough to be tragic, and particular enough to be theirs. ✓c

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Andrew Lytle and the Cultivation of American Letters

by William Pratt

Anna Mycek Wodecki

The name of Andrew Lytle should be better known than it is: he has been a distinguished novelist and author of some widely anthologized short stories; an essayist, historian, and memoirist; an editor of the *Sewanee Review* for many years; and a teacher of creative writing at the University of Florida and the University of Iowa. In all of these roles, he has been one of the chief cultivators of 20th-century American letters. And 20th-century American letters do count in the eyes of the world, for whatever pride we may take in our status as the oldest constitutional democracy, as a major winner in two world wars, as the world's only superpower, it is to 20th-century American letters that we owe most of our international reputation as a vital seedbed of artistic and intellectual culture.

If nations have their historic moments, we have had ours in this century: Americans have been the movers and shapers of the world for fully three generations, but we tend to credit the political and military leaders who have asserted our physical greatness in the eyes of the world more than we credit the intellectual leaders who at the same time have achieved a comparable moral and spiritual greatness for us. Among these leaders, Andrew Lytle stands high. His stature has as much to do with historical coincidence as with his own formidable talents, for he was part of the generation at Vanderbilt who created the Fugitives and the Agrarians in the 1920's and 1930's.

The writers linked together as Southern Fugitive-Agrarians have had as much to do with the intellectual history of 20th-century America as the New England Transcendentalists had to do with the intellectual history of 19th-century America. Any student of American literature knows that Emerson and Thoreau and Whitman are at the heart of American Romanticism, and though the intellectual history of our century is not quite as clear, I think a similar claim can be made for Ransom and Tate and Warren and Davidson and Lytle, that they made the Southern Fugitive-Agrarians the center of American modernism—which also means, incidentally, that they made Monteagle, Tennessee, the Southern equivalent of Concord, Massachusetts, for as Concord is to Boston, so Monteagle is to Nashville. Indeed, Monteagle is more Agrarian than Nashville, and Andrew Lytle has been the most consistent Agrarian simply in choosing to live there off and on for 50 years, while the others went elsewhere or stayed in Nashville to pursue their distinguished careers.

I am not claiming that the Fugitive-Agrarians are the greatest modern American writers, for there are Pound and Eliot and Faulkner to consider, none of whom were Fugitives or Agrarians. No, when I say that the Fugitive-Agrarians were at the center of American modernism, I mean that their peculiar combination of literary ideas and practices defines modernism for us, just as the Transcendentalists define what we mean by Romanticism. Both groups were writers and thinkers rather than practical men; their theories and examples shaped American intellectual history during much of the past two centuries.

The Fugitives were first of all poets: if they had not earned themselves an international reputation as literary artists first, with the publication for a few short years (from 1922-1925) of the *Fugitive* magazine in Nashville, they would not have had the respect they commanded in 1930 when they published *I'll Take My Stand*, a symposium on the topic of Agrarianism. Their poetry came before their social ideas, and Andrew Lytle contributed a poem, "Edward Graves," to the *Fugitive* before he

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contributed his Agrarian essay to *I'll Take My Stand*. In other words, he was a Fugitive first and an Agrarian second, though the poem is singular for Lytle, who, unlike the other main Fugitives, wrote mostly fiction and made his reputation as a novelist rather than as a poet. On the strength of that one poem alone, Andrew Lytle deserves to be called both a Fugitive and an Agrarian and as such one of the major cultivators of American letters in this century.

And what were these ideas? First, the Fugitives assumed that poetry itself is a kind of knowledge essential to human beings, that we need great literature—"poetry" is a generic name for the best writing—as we need such basic things as food and water, or political and social institutions, or religious beliefs, or military weapons, or scientific theories and methods for controlling nature. In other words, the Fugitives put common language to its highest use as art, holding that we need the poet's work in order to know ourselves, because, in the words of Allen Tate's essay on "The Man of Letters in the Modern World," it is the poet who above all "must recreate for his age the image of man."

Then the Agrarian idea was superimposed on the Fugitive idea, giving further potency to the relation between literature and society. The Agrarian idea can be reduced to the thought—nowhere better expressed than by Andrew Lytle himself in one of his own later essays, "The State of Letters in a Time of Disorder"—that "the great, at least lasting, literatures and representative arts are found in either a pastoral or an agrarian society." Now, many have disagreed with this idea, and a storm of controversy has surrounded Agrarianism from its beginning: modern society, unsympathetic critics declare, is governed by capitalism, and the pastoral society of the Agrarians has been left far behind, a part of the past that is never to be recovered. Many critics still ridicule Agrarianism, but the ideals on which literary art is based do not derive from capitalism, a pragmatic economic theory dedicated to the making of money; rather, the literary arts are still based on the cultivation of nature, an Agrarian ideal, which extends to the cultivation of letters by analogy and which capitalism has not replaced. So if we follow the logic of Andrew Lytle and the Fugitive-Agrarians, poetry is as necessary to humane existence, that is to civilized life, as farming and husbandry, that is the cultivation of nature, from which city dwellers still derive their sustenance in food and their enjoyment of natural abundance and beauty. Ransom spoke of Agrarianism as the "aesthetics of regionalism," which meant to him that, wherever one lived, nature was to be appreciated for its beauty as well as its nourishment. Despite its critics, Agrarianism is not an outworn or discredited philosophy, for though it is true that most Americans today live in cities, not on farms, whatever aesthetic sense we retain as individuals or as a nation continues to come from the land rather than from the factory. Americans have a great literature not because we are a progressive, powerful, technological society but because we have a long memory, which reaches deep into the past to help us understand ourselves and criticize the present generation.

Donald Davidson captured the Fugitive-Agrarian philosophy beautifully in a late poem called "Lines Written for Allen Tate On His Sixtieth Anniversary," which was composed in 1959, long after the Fugitives and Agrarians had gathered at Vanderbilt. Reaching into the past to recall meetings held in the 1920's and 1930's at Benfolly, the home of Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon in Clarksville, Tennessee, the poem opens with an image of the Civil War in action, the sound of guns firing at a fort near Clarksville on the Cumberland River, followed by Andrew Lytle's voice as he led his fellow writers in a discussion of Southern history and myth:

> The sound of guns from beleaguered Donelson
> Up-river flowed again to Benfolly's hearth.
> Year to familiar year we had heard it run
> World-round and back, till Lytle cried out: "Earth
> Is good, but better is land, and best
> A land still fought-for, even in retreat;
> For how else can Aeneas find his rest
> And the child hearken and dream at his grandsire's feet?"

Davidson's poem is proof that Andrew Lytle played a central role among the Fugitive-Agrarians, because his historical memory and mythical imagination enabled him to find a parallel between the Southerners defeated by the Yankees in the Civil War and the Trojans defeated by the Greeks in the Trojan War. He argues dramatically for an invincible spirit in the South, which could, like that of the Trojan hero Aeneas, go on after defeat to found a new civilization to replace the old. Lytle, as Davidson pictures him, is a unifier of past and present, basing his regional loyalty on a timeless sense of human destiny, mingling his voice with those of Ransom and Tate and Warren and Davidson to honor the muses of poetry and "To join the long procession where it winds / Up to a mountain home"—a final destination that sounds much more like Monteagle than Clarksville. If Davidson's poem opens at Benfolly, it appears to end at Monteagle.

Andrew Lytle's whole view of life stems from the family, first and last, which he believes to be the bastion of Southern society even now.

Andrew Lytle is no anachronism as one of the leading Fugitive-Agrarians. He is a leading modernist as well, for modernism has always been a self-critical movement; in Stephen Spender's happy phrase, it is "revolutionary traditionalism." That is to say, modernists have been revolutionary in form but traditional in content, deploring much of what is superficially modern—in particular the dominance of money and machines—and favoring instead new expressions of the older values among which religion and art are dominant. Although these writers have been realistic enough to recognize that, again to quote Lytle, while "we still live within the confines of Christendom . . . . we are in its satanic phase."

Thus, if we place Andrew Lytle where he belongs, as a modern writer who voices old truths in compelling and often disturbing new forms, we are identifying him broadly as a cul-

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tivator of American letters, by virtue of the historical accident that he was a Fugitive-Agrarian, a Southern poet and critic who took part in the central intellectual movement of 20th-century America. He deserves recognition for being in the right place at the right time with the right measure of talent, more a matter of fate than of free will; but he deserves individual credit as well for his unique achievement as a writer, for all his work and its wide influence.

Andrew Lytle has believed throughout his long career that all writing is a craft; in this, he has followed such admired masters as Gustave Flaubert and Henry James and Ford Madox Ford. In "The State of Letters in a Time of Disorder," Lytle spoke of his long tenure as editor of the *Sewanee Review*, saying, "At the *Review*, some five or six thousand manuscripts pass over the editors' desks each year. Only eighty are printed." He concedes that "obviously, good things must be rejected" but maintains that, nevertheless, "the quarterlies are needed more today than ever. Their care for language and style and the protection of what is eternal in letters makes them a kind of supreme court of literary judgment." It was Lytle himself who, by taking over the editorship of the *Sewanee Review* in the early 1940's with his old Fugitive-Agrarian friend Allen Tate, helped make it one of the preeminent literary journals in the English-speaking world. And it was Lytle who, by his long tenure as editor, firmly upheld the craft of writing, maintaining that the term "creative" was wrongly—though frequently—used to mean "imaginative." As he always insisted, "Creation cannot properly belong to man; it belongs to God." Since the religious perspective dominates all of Andrew Lytle's writing, for him the *craft* of writing is the highest possible human achievement, even the best writer being simply man inspired by God as the only true Creator.

Andrew Lytle sees myth as central to all literature, which means that the religious interpretation of history is essential for every writer, whether as a guide when he is writing stories or novels or as a clue to the practice of the best writers at any time. His constant religious perspective is evident in everything he has written (Madison Smartt Bell writes in his preface to the new edition of *A Wake for the Living* that "Lytle's Christendom is a society not of corporations but of individual creatures of God"), and it has had a beneficial influence on many other writers, starting with Flannery O'Connor, whom he taught at the beginning of her career at the Writers' Workshop in Iowa and who would later write that what was most distinctive about Southern literature was its unique combination of "mystery and manners." Though there is no evidence of any direct influence on the greatest mythmaker among Southern writers, William Faulkner, and no way of proving his indirect influence, a case can be made that Andrew Lytle's first, and in my opinion, best book, *Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company*—still the best-written of several good biographies of Forrest—has more than coincidental parallels in Faulkner. Lytle's book was published in 1931, seven years before Faulkner brought out his Civil War stories in *The Unvanquished* in 1938.

Though we know that Faulkner based his mythical Confederate hero, Colonel John Sartoris, on his own real-life great-grandfather, Colonel William C. Falkner, there is no doubt that he also drew on his knowledge of the most famous of Confederate cavalry generals, Nathan Bedford Forrest, who came from Memphis and for a time had his headquarters in Oxford. For instance, though the real Colonel Falkner did not ride with Forrest's raiders in northern Mississippi, the fictional Colonel Sartoris in *The Unvanquished* does so proudly. Moreover, Faulkner had him ride into battle on a stallion named Jupiter, a fictional counterpart to Forrest's favorite warhorse, King Philip. The fictional Colonel Sartoris fights in the real Battle of Hurricane Creek, near Oxford, where Forrest fought against the Yankees, and in an amusing skirmish, he deprives a Yankee battalion of its clothes and then lets them sneak off in the night, as Forrest once forced a Yankee general to escape unclothed in Memphis, causing him greater humiliation than by violent capture. Most pertinently, as Lytle's biography makes plain, after the Civil War was over, Forrest, who never lost a battle but killed many men in combat, served as Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan to restore order in the South by striking fear in the Carpetbaggers and black Republicans who were trying to take it over, but then he renounced further bloodshed, saying, "I have seen too much of violence, and I want to close my days at peace with all the world, as I am now at peace with my Maker." Faulkner's fictional Colonel Sartoris says, after he has returned from defeat to rebuild his plantation and restore order in his native town of Jefferson, Mississippi, killing a couple of Carpetbaggers in the process, "I have accomplished my aim, and now I shall do a little moral housecleaning. I am tired of killing men, no matter what the necessity or the end. Tomorrow, when I go to town and meet Ben Redmond, I shall be unarmed." Those words are spoken in "An Odor of Verbena," the final story in *The Unvanquished*, and Colonel Sartoris does meet his end violently at the hands of his enemy, but his son Bayard faces down the same enemy without firing a shot and so peacefully accomplishes revenge for his father's death, a significant change in the Sartoris family's tradition of violence and in the South after the Civil War.

Thus, when Faulkner made his fictional Confederate Colonel John Sartoris relinquish violence after a violent life, he was clearly casting him in the mold of Andrew Lytle's portrait of Forrest. *The Unvanquished* was praised by Lytle as one of Faulkner's "most successful and least understood novels," and the title fits Forrest better than any other Southern leader, for though Faulkner applies it to the women more than to the men who survived the Civil War, in a hilarious story he wrote after the novel called "My Grandmother Millard and General Bedford Forrest and the Battle of Harrykin Creek," Faulkner dramatized the gallant figure of the real undefeated Confederate general coming to the aid of an old friend, the fictional Confederate widow Rosa Millard. Faulkner describes Forrest visiting Rosa Millard at the Sartoris plantation as "a big dusty man with a big beard so black it looked almost blue and eyes like a sleepy owl," a description that agrees with the detailed eyewitness account of Forrest quoted by Lytle.

Though in his story the real General Bedford Forrest meets the fictional Rosa Millard and helps her marry off a member of her family to one of his officers, Faulkner had Forrest politely decline a breakfast invitation from Granny Millard, because he is going to be "whuppin" General Smith at Tallahatchie Crossing, on the river not far from Hurricane Creek, while he is headquartered at the fictional town of Jefferson. Lytle in his biography had Forrest and his Confederate cavalry fighting the Yankees under General A.J. Smith at Hurricane Creek, near the Tallahatchie Crossing, for three days before retiring to his headquarters at the real town of Oxford.

When Lytle wrote his family memoir, *A Wake for the Living*, almost half a century after he wrote his first book, *Bedford For-*

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rest and His Critter Company, he consciously returned to the theme he had started with, that the Southern spirit was best epitomized by Forrest, a commoner who became a general, who was victorious even in defeat. Lytle says:

> In the Confederacy's declining fortunes one man stood out in the minds of Middle Tennessee and the contiguous states. General Forrest was the epitome of the spirit and the power to win. People saw in him themselves at their best in a crisis. He won while all others were retreating or being whipped.

More than he is known by any other name, Andrew Lytle is known as an Agrarian; in fact, he has been called *the* Agrarian, and his last major book, *A Wake for the Living*, is a family history that is like a long postscript to his early Agrarian essay, "The Hind Tit," in *I'll Take My Stand*, because it traces the movements of the Lytles from the Scottish border with England to Ireland to Pennsylvania and then to North Carolina and Tennessee, telling how one family retained its loyalty to the land it farmed, though in several different places and under several different governments. The Agrarian philosophy he espoused in 1930 seems to have stemmed from his earliest ancestors and to have been passed down to him in unbroken family succession. Andrew Lytle's whole view of life stems from the family, first and last, which he believes to be the bastion of Southern society even now and which he defines realistically: "A family is not a democracy, for the parents hold the authority. It is hierarchical always, even to the spoiled last child," with God sovereign in the universe and the family His chosen instrument of faith and loyalty, generation after generation. To Lytle's unifying vision, the individual is always part of a larger whole, which reaches upward and outward from self to family, family to land, land to state, state to world, and world to Heaven. His Agrarianism is clearly much more than a belief in the farmer's life as a model: it is a religious belief, like that of Thomas Jefferson, the Founding Father of American Agrarianism, who wrote long ago in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* that "those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God." Lytle in his writing has consistently seen man as a link in the Divine Chain of Being, which stretches from the human individual through nature up to God.

Though he has traveled widely in pursuit of his literary career, Lytle has maintained ties to his native Tennessee, returning from his tenure as teacher of writing at the University of Iowa from 1946 to 1947 and the University of Florida from 1948 to 1961 to Sewanee, not far from his birthplace in Murfreesboro (a town founded by his ancestor, William Lytle), to teach at the University of the South, live in The Log Cabin at Monteagle, and edit the *Sewanee Review* from 1961 to 1972. He won his greatest fame as a historical novelist, writing about the Civil War in *The Long Night* (1936), about DeSoto's Spanish expedition to the New World in *At the Moon's Inn* (1941), and about a post-Civil War family's adventures in *The Velvet Horn* (1957), his most experimental (and most praised) novel. Now past age 90, he continues to write and live at Monteagle, where the Agrarians of old so often gathered, though as Vanderbilt historian Paul Conkin has written in *The Southern Agrarians* (1988):

> In 1980 the three survivors—Lanier, Lytle, Warren—returned to Vanderbilt for a final Agrarian reunion, a conference on Agrarianism fifty years after the publication of *I'll Take My Stand*. Only Lytle, echoing the old themes, seemed an unreconstructed believer. Through the years, in letters, essays, interviews, he has kept up the fight. Finally, in a sense, Agrarianism had shrunk to the early "kid" of the group, to the ever faithful Andrew.

It may seem to Paul Conkin, a respected historian but one of many unsympathetic critics of Agrarianism, that the movement had "shrunk" to a single living writer, Andrew Lytle, but in fact Agrarianism stands as a perennial philosophy, upholding not simply farming as a way of life but man as cultivator of the best in nature, including his own nature; the craft of writing, which in its highest sense is literature, one of the fine arts; literature, which at its best is myth, the religious interpretation of history; and history, which at its best portrays man in his right relation to nature and to God.

To give the most fitting tribute to Andrew Lytle, Agrarian of American letters, would be to say that what General Nathan Bedford Forrest has meant to Andrew Lytle, Andrew Lytle means to his readers today. Both kinds of American heroes will always be needed: those who in time of war are, like Nathan Bedford Forrest, heroes of the sword and those who in time of peace are, like Andrew Lytle, heroes of the pen. c

Guides

by Gloria Whelan

You'd have thought he'd had enough
of the land's grasp and hook
growing up on a scant farm, nourished
on winter carrots and green potatoes,
the harsh earth hard-hearted
as his German father, *der Melancholiker*,
who joylessly birched him every day.
Spring dunging, summer digging
sugar beets, cutting straw
on fields ravenous for farmers' blood.
He fled to the auto town
where money in those halcyon days
was easy to harvest.
When he grew rich
his holidays were spent cropping
trout, ducks and deer,
but not alone. He hired guides
to save him from the dangerous places,
provident men to tell him where sly
trout lay shimmying in the riffles,
where wary deer wintered,
cowering in the somber cedar swamps,
guides who pitched snug tents,
provided food, a happy home,
the best of them, the French Canadian
who had no English words, but sang
to the storm, and kept the fire going.
The guides. All those fathers.

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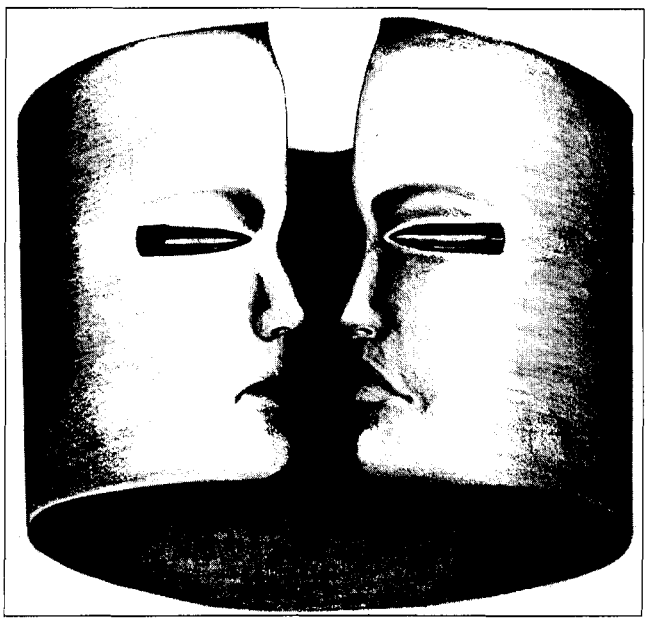
Southern Supplements

by Clyde Wilson

"We have sung of the soldiers and sailors, but who shall hymn the politicians?"
—Herman Melville



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography
by Jack Hurst
New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 434 pp., $30.00

Richard Taylor: Soldier Prince of Dixie
by T. Michael Parrish
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; 570 pp., $34.95

The Civil War World of Herman Melville
by Stanton Garner
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas; 544 pp., $29.95

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The great classicist and poet A.E. Housman once wrote that the work of a scholar in the humanities is not like that of a scientist examining specimens under a microscope—it is more like the work of a dog searching for fleas. Housman thus punctured the scientific pretensions of some humanists and made an appeal for the old-fashioned virtues of painstaking work, common sense, and humble judgment. As another great British scholar, Veronica Wedgwood, put it: "History is an art—like all the other sciences."

It follows, and is indeed a truism, that all historians are biased. None escapes entirely the effects of his allegiances and preoccupations. But it is also true that some historians are more competent—and more honest—than others. Yet another great English historian, Sir Herbert Butterfield, suggested that it is best to trust those historians who are aware of and admit their own biases and who, as much as possible, separate the scholarly task of determining what happened and why from a personal moral judgment of these events—and that it is well to suspect and discount those historians who are eager to make sweeping moral condemnations, forgetting not only that there are at least two sides to every question but that we have all of us been exhorted to "judge not, that ye be not judged."

In regard to the Great Unpleasantness in the middle of the last century, which is still the central event in American history, good history continues to be written by serious and honest scholars, despite the reign of an official dogma which casts that great and complex happening in the most simplistic and misleading moralistic terms, as a righteous crusade for the suppression of wickedness. (What Robert Penn Warren called the national "Treasury of Virtue" with respect to the Civil War is very obviously the parent of political correctness.) The authors of the present literary selections are creatures of our time, their political values correct and unexceptional. But their honesty and competence as historians allow them to tell stories that are unfashionably true, though sometimes they do it a little too apologetically.

Unlike the other recent biography of Bedford Forrest by Brian S. Wills, so neatly and justly skewered by J.O. Tate in *Chronicles* ("Lastest with the Leastest," December 1992), Hurst's is a real contribution despite the fact—or perhaps because of the fact—that he is not a professional academic. Wills' biography contributed nothing new in data or in idea except to deconstruct the fascinat-

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ing story of Forrest according to the canons of political correctness and psychobabble. Hurst, by contrast, has developed new material pertaining to the obscurities of Forrest's antebellum and postbellum life, and the more familiar history of the incredible campaigns he has retold clearly and well. Moreover, he is able to put Forrest in the perspective of his times, which is what a historian should do, rather than merely invoking labels. As Hurst points out, the American figure Forrest most resembles is his fellow Tennessean of a generation earlier, Andrew Jackson. The difference between them was that courageous, quick-witted, self-made Southerners could not play the same national role in Forrest's time as in Jackson's. Among the most interesting parts of the book are its presentations of Forrest's relation with black people after the war—another exceedingly complex historical situation that has been misrepresented by sloganeers. Hundreds of black people attended Forrest's funeral, and during Reconstruction he was berated by a Union officer from Connecticut for not working his plantation laborers hard enough.

In a private conversation with an Englishman after the war, R.E. Lee is supposed to have been asked who was the greatest soldier produced by the American war and to have unhesitatingly replied: Forrest. Richard Taylor won fewer victories than Forrest, but those he did win exhibited a similar ability to triumph by skill and will against long odds. In the Red River Campaign in Louisiana in the spring of 1864, Taylor, with vastly outnumbered and under-equipped forces, defeated a huge federal military-naval expedition. (Of course, the federals had the misfortune to be commanded by one of many Republican political generals, "Commissary" Banks of Massachusetts.) After Forrest, Taylor may have been the best nonprofessional general produced by the war, though the South Carolinian Wade Hampton is also a contender.

Together, Taylor and Forrest represented extremes of Southern society: Taylor the well-educated, wealthy, cosmopolitan son of a President; Forrest the unpolished, self-made son of a frontier blacksmith. The two men, at such times as they collaborated, got along famously. Taylor had the respect for Forrest that all good soldiers had, and Forrest is reported to have said of Taylor: "He's the biggest man in the lot. If we'd had more like him, we would have licked the Yankees long ago." Both gave their all (which was a great deal) to their cause, and both ended the war shattered in health and fortune.

Taylor's biographer is clearly not sympathetic with the conservative, aristocratic values and way of life that his subject followed, but he is able to examine them with judicial impartiality. For the terrible simplifiers of American racial history, such impartiality complicates the evidence: Union forces devastated Taylor's plantation, thereby incidentally turning his slaves out to starve. (They also nailed the family pets to a barn.) And consider the remarks of Sherman, then a Louisiana college president acquainted with Taylor, just before the war: "If they [Southerners] design to protect themselves against negroes and abolitionists, I will help; if they propose to leave the Union on account of a supposed fact that the northern people are all abolitionists . . . I will stand by Ohio and the Northwest."

Stanton Garner's *The Civil War World of Herman Melville* shifts our attention from the soldiers of the South to the civilian North: a dense and detailed (perhaps too dense and detailed) account of Melville's life, art, and mind in relation to the war. The book is an original contribution, with many virtues. It is not only literary history, but social and intellectual history as well.

In 1861 Melville was a literary has-been, living in genteel poverty and chiefly remembered as the author of *Typee*. *Moby Dick*, published ten years earlier, had been a complete critical and commercial failure, its author barely tolerated by the controlling Boston mafia of American literature. Melville had, seemingly, already consigned himself to oblivion when the war revived his literary aspirations and he undertook to record and interpret it in poetry, the result being *Battle-Pieces*, a collection published in 1866. This work has generally been regarded as unimportant, the work of an author emotionally disengaged from his subject, lost in his own fantasies. To the contrary, Garner contends that it is the most important body of poetry produced by an American about the war and by a writer deeply engaged—an argument for which he makes a strong case.

One problem, of course, was that Melville's book was too profound for its time, when popular Northern war poetry consisted largely of sentimental jingles and blasphemous pseudo-hymns. Though Garner does not put it exactly this way, another problem was that the work was politically incorrect: Melville refused to believe that God took sides in war and regarded the conflict between the American states as an immense tragedy bearable only when understood as part of the partially unknowable plan of divine providence. The outcome, for Melville, was foreordained and providential, a fact that did not however abrogate the ambiguity and pain of human action, decision, and suffering. ("O, much of doubt in after days / Shall cling, as now, to the war. / Of the right and wrong they'll still debate." "Power unanointed may come— / Dominion (unsought by the free) / . . . But the Founders' dream shall flee.") Consider these lines, reflecting on the employment of powerful artillery against the civilians of Charleston:

> Who weeps for the woeful City
> Let him weep for our guilty kind;
> Who joys at her wild despairing
> Christ, the Forgiver, convert his mind.

Garner's book has many incidental virtues. Its author treats Melville, as indeed a 19th-century American should be treated, as a member of an extended family, not as an alienated artist of the modern type. Garner understands that Melville needs to be seen in relation to a huge circle of siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, and in-laws whose viewpoints and experiences must be recognized as part of his creative material.

One advantage of this approach is that it forces the author to recognize and come to terms with the existence of the forgotten millions of Northerners who preferred McClellan's civilized and limited war to Sherman's terrorism against civilians; who resisted and resented Lincoln's incipient dictatorship and destruction of the Constitution (Melville was probably kept under surveillance by military spies in New York); and who regarded defeated Southerners as erring fellow countrymen, better treated with magnanimity than malice. This makes for some very interesting neglected history. Garner also keeps tabs on other Northern writers in the course of his study of Melville: Whitman, who saw much of the war firsthand but was largely unable to rise above subjective experi-

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ence; Hawthorne, whose views resembled Melville's but who was in sorrowful decline; gentle Whittier, who, nearly unique among abolitionists, hated the sin of slavery but not the slaveholding sinner; Emerson, the morally irresponsible, egotistical, nasty, self-serving prototype of the American liberal intellectual.

It is a measure of our low contemporary estate that Reconstruction, the most corrupt and shameful episode of the whole of our national history, is now regarded as a great achievement, faultable only because it did not go far enough. Yet Melville was so appalled by the onset of Radical Reconstruction following a brief period of civility at the end of the war that he literally stopped the presses to revise his book, adding a long poem, "Lee in the Capitol," and a prose "Supplement," both pleas to the North for magnanimity and moderation. These wise documents should be read by all decent Americans concerned with understanding regional and racial conflicts.

Melville's apprehension of the war as a tragedy in which no sweeping self-congratulation was justified by either side, though premature, was prophetic: it was the view that most decent Americans, North and South, came to have of the war when passions had finally died away. Melville thus anticipated what came to be a kind of national consensus in the late 19th and early 20th centuries regarding the American Civil War. This consensus, worked out in countless veterans' gatherings and public orations, went something like this: Southerners would acknowledge that they were glad that the Union had been preserved and slavery abolished. They would be, moreover, good citizens ever after. In return, Northerners would acknowledge that Southerners, though in error, had fought courageously and honorably in the war and would promise to respect their history and its symbols. This agreement held for a long time, until 1993 in fact, when the United States Senate violated it by its churlish action against the United Daughters of the Confederacy, although Southerners have faithfully kept their part of the agreement. Even more repulsive than the Senate majority's action was the historical ignorance it displayed and the vulgarity of the accompanying remarks. The senators should be reminded of the warning given by Melville's fictional Lee, when he was called before the Reconstruction Committee of the Senate:

> Push not your triumph; do not urge
> Submissiveness beyond the verge.

The historical Lee had been more prudent and reticent. c

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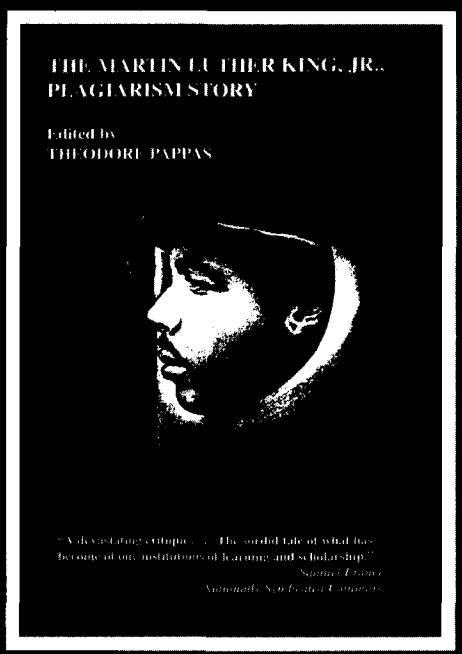

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Catholic Moments

by Paul Gottfried

Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985
by Patrick Allitt
Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 328 pp., $29.95

◆

Patrick Allitt's study of Catholic intellectuals and their relationship to postwar conservatism is clearly presented and full of stimulating perceptions. Basic to this book is the contrast between two generations of American Catholic thinkers with some connection to the right: the generation of the 50's as typified by the Catholic anticommunists grouped around *National Review* and the generation of the 70's and 80's as represented by Michael Novak, Garry Wills, and—at least by intention—Thomas Molnar and John Lukacs. Though the reader may occasionally lose sight of the main theme through the superabundance of biographical sketches, the author's argument holds together all the same. Allitt demonstrates to what extent anticommunism provided the ideological entry point into American national culture for devout Catholics in the postwar years. He correctly points out that what separated conservative and liberal Catholic intellectuals of the 50's was the intensity of their anticommunism, not the question of who was or was not anticommunist. Allitt also suggests that the pro-capitalist stance of many Catholic conservatives was derivative of their hatred of "godless communism" as the enemy of the West: since the anti-Christian communists were socialists as well, Catholic anticommunists became free-marketeers, exaggerating the openings to a market economy that they claimed to find in antisocialist papal encyclicals like *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* and reading papal defenses of private property and local political authority and attacks upon atheist socialism as endorsements of laissez-faire economics or as critiques of the New Deal.

Allitt shows that such efforts at integrating Catholic social teachings into the programs of the American right were generationally situated; they represented attempts by first-generation educated American Catholics to ease the tensions between their essentially medieval religious culture and their recently discovered American identity. Anticommunism became the means toward that end, particularly in the McCarthy era. It then seemed possible to affirm one's Catholic and American loyalties as a single commitment to protecting the West against the communist Antichrist. The more passionate their anticommunist statements, as Allitt shows in the case of the repentant communist-turned-Catholic Louis Budenz, the greater the applause American Catholics could expect from their coreligionists and patriotic groups. The success of Senator McCarthy was obviously instructive here.

This Catholic anticommunist American identity eventually wore thin, as Allitt makes clear. The *National Review* circle turned critical of papal authority after the death of the fiercely anticommunist Pius XII, and highly literate Catholics, some on the right, began to ridicule the "apocalyptic anticommunism" associated with *National Review* and the McCarthy movement. Not only contributors to *Commonwealth* and *America*, but even nonliberal émigré Catholic contributors to NR, Thomas Molnar and John Lukacs, expressed distaste for what they saw as the crudely American rather than truly Catholic crusade against a communist absolute enemy. Meanwhile, nonbelieving anticommunists like Max Eastman and Ayn Rand rebelled against the "pontificating and ecclesiastical" character of the Catholic anticommunist right. By the mid-60's, the Catholic-capitalist-anticommunist synthesis incarnated by *National Review* was at risk. The withdrawal from that front of the triumphalist Catholics, led by Buckley's brother-in-law L. Brent Bozell, who opposed the "liberal foundations" of the American Republic, was an assault from the right on the American Catholic conservatism that arose in the late 40's and whose attempt to marry Catholic faith and American patriotism through crusading anticommunism turned out to be unmistakably time-bound.

Allitt focuses next on a second generation of American Catholic intellectuals exemplified by Garry Wills and Michael Novak. The pairing is not haphazard. Despite the political differences between these two men that became apparent by the 80's, the Catholic Marxist Wills and the Catholic neoconservative Novak had shared experiences: both opposed American involvement in the Vietnam War and expressed revulsion for the Protestant America that Catholic conservatives had once hoped to embrace in a patriotic alliance. The relationship of these intellectuals to their Catholic heritage was in any case more ambivalent than that of American Catholic conservatives of the 50's. Novak and Wills were more openly critical of the Catholic hierarchy, just as they minced no words in assailing the moral habits of the WASP majority. Allitt observes a sense of cultural alienation in these figures, which placed them at a painful distance from both their Catholic roots and their American identity. By evoking a pair of Central European Catholics, Molnar and Lukacs, he identifies two unexpected precursors of this second generation. Allitt is remarkably perceptive in pointing up the connections between particular Catholic intellectuals as critics of the American Catholic and American Protestant heritages, finding experiential similarities between people who would gag at the association. Repugnance for Puritanism and Yankee materialism is a persistent trait in all of the second-generation Catholics associated with the American right whom Allitt examines. Though Michael Novak has become a self-described defender of "democratic capitalism" and seems to have distanced himself from the rest of the group, Allitt shows that even this exception proves the rule, since Novak has denounced the Manchestrian liberalism that he attributes to Protestant society while praising the welfare-state capitalism he identifies with Catholic ethnics and Jews.

Allitt also observes the attempts by Novak and Wills to define themselves as "conservatives," regardless of their differences with McCarthyite Catholics and their own changing political allegiances, and he shows how the mystique of the Catholic right of the 50's cast a spell even on some of its Catholic critics.

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For Lukacs, Wills, and Novak, Allitt makes clear, the designation "conservative" remains a positive one linked to their Catholic faith: they are quarreling only with its application to those of whom they disapprove. One might note the dissimilarity between these Catholic intellectuals and the Jewish neoconservatives who were and are their contemporaries. Though the latter might have chosen by the late 70's to define themselves as "conservative," they accepted that label only reluctantly from others. Unlike the Catholic ethnics who embraced "the c-word" enthusiastically, these Jewish former radicals for at least a decade could find no social or cultural advantages in claiming to be on the right.

Despite its many insights and well-edited prose, Allitt's study has some defects, among them a taxonomic problem. What exactly does Allitt mean by a Catholic conservative? About half of his study deals with the Catholic anticommunism of the postwar era, particularly with the *National Review* circle and its liberal Catholic critics. It provides engaging vignettes of Molnar, Lukacs, and other Catholic intellectuals who are conservative in some sense. Yet it offers no explicit criteria for its choice of subjects. Why does the Catholic Burkean Ross Hoffman rate detailed treatment, while Russell Kirk, Francis Canavan, S.J., and Peter Stanlis—all more *prolific* Catholic Burkeans—receive only brief or passing mention? Why do some Catholic conservative movement activists merit discussions, but not such Thomists of conservative political views as Jude Doherty, Russell Hittinger, and Robert George? Why is no discussion allotted to the present-day Catholic paleoconservatives, who fit neither of the generational categories offered by Allitt? The total absence of this *tertium quid* from his study, even as a limiting case, is a noteworthy defect. Finally, why does Flannery O'Connor, a postwar conservative orthodox Catholic and a literary genius, receive no mention at all? Some of Allitt's biographical choices and omissions may be defensible in terms of his theme, but the thematic basis for selection should have been stated at the beginning and subsequently adhered to.

There is also the related question of whether Allitt distinguishes significantly between Catholics who are politically conservative and those who are theological traditionalists. Though some of his subjects fall into both categories, others do not. In the dispute waged between *National Review* and "Catholic liberals" over John XXIII's conciliatory overtures to Soviet leaders in the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961), it is unclear whether the embattled Catholic anticommunists were positioning themselves to the religious right of their pro-papal opponents. Even from Allitt's account, it seems that the Jesuit and Thomist scholar Norris Clarke, writing in *America*, may have been speaking as an indignant orthodox Catholic, and not as a liberal of any kind, when he attacked the inconsistent Catholicism of some editors of *National Review*. When it suited their purpose, William Buckley and his friends demanded allegiance to papal encyclicals denouncing communism and socialism. But, as Clarke argued, they did not hesitate to dismiss papal teachings that were inconsistent with their own militant anticommunism. On the other hand, the value of Allitt's scholarship is that its presentation of such debates is even more graphic than my memories of them. Allitt brings back the near past in a creative, plausible way.

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National Enormities

by James E. Kibler

Seed From Madagascar
by Duncan Clinch Heyward
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press;
312 pp., $21.95

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Seed From Madagascar, first published in 1937 and now printed for the third time, is an agrarian memoir. Its author was one of the last rice planters of coastal Carolina, from a family who had been in the business for two centuries. Duncan Heyward details the methodology of rice planting as only one well acquainted with the crop could. The volume, however, is one of those literary treasures that transcend social and economic history: beautifully written, of interest to others than students of rice culture and the high civilization it produced. Heyward is our Marcus Cato of rice planting. He is eminently practical and writes in an appropriately clean, clear prose sharply edged by verisimilitude. But there is as much of Vergil's *Georgica* in *Seed From Madagascar* as there is of Cato's *De Agricultura*. The volume should be seen in the context of the great Low Country Renaissance of the 1920's and 30's, where it belongs with the paintings of Alice Huger Smith and Elizabeth Verner; the prose of Verner, Herbert Ravenel Sass, DuBose Heyward, Josephine Pinckney, and Julia Peterkin; the Preservation Society's movement to protect and restore Charleston's architectural heritage; and the formation of the Poetry Society of South Carolina, an institution that became a major stimulus to the literary Renaissance in the South as a whole.

The human drama of loss and dispossession is quietly played out before our eyes as we witness the destruction of an agrarian way of life, one that took over two centuries to create: we come to know this rice farmer who, with five generations of rice planters staring at him accusingly from their portraits on the walls, signs away his land to become an insurance salesman and stockbroker. It is therefore particularly unfortunate that Peter Coclanis's introduction to the new edition is pedestrian in its concepts and superficial in its ideas. Coclanis fails to go beyond the narrowness of fashionable concerns to grasp the merits of a work that can stand in the company of great celebrations of life on the land.

For there is no mistaking that Heyward loved the soil he farmed and the crop he raised. "I know of no crop," he wrote, "which in beauty can be compared with a crop of rice. In my dreams I still see the crops I used to grow, and when I am awake, I am conscious of the fact that my dreams failed to do them justice." He could sympathize with his grandfather Charles Heyward's feelings in the year 1865 half a century later: "Charles Heyward's heart was yearning for Combahee, which he was destined never to see again." In 1913, "when rice planting was ended on my plantations," the same silence that Charles Heyward had encountered in 1865 "certainly got on my nerves. . . . Especially did it hurt me to see abandoned the lands which had been reclaimed by my people and planted by them for so many years." Heyward recounts the habit of an old,

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rich planting friend, no doubt seeing himself in the man: "Each year at harvest time his family noticed that he hung on the wall of his house on the plantation a sheaf of rice, and removed the one he placed there the year before. Two years ago, when he died at a ripe old age, he requested his family to place the sheaf on his casket instead of flowers. He wanted the sheaf to go with him to the grave." Perhaps only a farmer can truly understand Heyward's love of the crop he planted, his bond to the land and the way of life surrounding it, and the magnitude of his loss.

How peculiar that the introduction refers to the volume as an "oddly moving book." Why should it be "odd" that the book is "moving"? Is it because Heyward's father owned slaves? Or because Heyward was a patrician Southerner? Or because he was a farmer? Beyond his failure to discern literary merit, Coclanis is unable to place *Seed From Madagascar* in the context of the Low Country Renaissance, as well as to recognize that what we have witnessed in these 250 pages is a full-blown tragedy. Heyward, himself, as Coclanis notes, considered his story a "tragic one," as did his old Gullah friend Judy, who wept when she heard that the Heywards no longer owned their old rice lands but had passed them to the DuPonts of Delaware to use as a hunting preserve—knowing as she did the traditions of the land that she and her people, black and white, had labored to "reclaim" and mold to provide life and human sustenance. Now all were leaving; the land was becoming "unsettled." What would she do? She did not want to leave. The land had its associations for her, as it did for Heyward. Her people were buried there; so were his. She knew its rhythms and had lived in accordance with them. Displacement and dispossession: these are the twin burdens of the tragedy Coclanis denies. Heyward's book, he asserts, is "an oft powerful lament, but not a tragedy true."

This untrue tragedy involves the complete destruction of an agrarian way of life. Heyward skillfully describes that life within the embrace of nature and all her moods. He shows its rootedness and the humility, reverence, and wisdom that such closeness to nature and nature's God breeds through stories that reveal harmonies and continuities and a strong sense of place. In the course of the volume, this life reaches its end as the descendants of slaves and masters alike are left to confront not just "Ole Stephney," as the Gullahs called the specter of hunger, but alienation, loss of community, loss of meaning and old agrarian values, urban existence, and "the cash-register evaluation of life," as a noted modern historian has called it. Given Heyward's acutely discerning understanding of these changes, one can see why, in selling the family land to outsiders who knew nothing of its traditions, he did indeed feel he was betraying his ancestors, who, Coclanis blithely assures us, given their "resourcefulness and ambition" would actually "have lauded rather than reproached him for the nimbleness he displayed in leaving agriculture."

One soon catches the drift of his introduction, which begins by asserting that there were no *genuine* aristocracy and no *real* traditions in the South anyway, only myths and convenient fabrications and inventions. What was forfeited was of no *real* value, and if nothing is lost, where is the tragedy? We have seen this sort of reasoning before: it is, in fact, the clichéd and regnant view in revisionist history today. Southerners, it seems, should be thankful for the torch that released them from a backward and outmoded way of living; they should be grateful for a liberating war against civilians, for a holocaust performed by a conquering army bent on subjugation, for short-term pillage and long-term economic exploitation. Heyward—evenly, calmly—makes such charges in a subtle and genteel manner, often through symbolism and allegory, while eschewing specific accusations.

So one is led to the inevitable question: What is Mr. Coclanis's agenda and from whence comes the climate of thought that produces such introductions? Heyward and his "indecent world" are merely the latest in a long line of victims sacrificed by the sanctimonious modern. But there is no footwork that can dance us around the enormous truth that Heyward's is the story, in little, of the destruction of the old America and many of its strongest values, of an agrarian way of life consciously created from the thinking of such Southerners as Washington, Jefferson, John Taylor of Caroline, John Randolph of Roanoke, Calhoun, and the Heyward family itself, more than six generations of whom lived the very agrarian philosophy that created in large part the American experiment—a noble experiment that with the 20th century and the passing of private agriculture is on the verge of lapsing into a warmed-over version of European socialism. When Duncan Heyward exchanged his family lands of several centuries for the insurance agent's pad and the stockbroker's ticker tape, his tragedy was not just his own or the South's, but the nation's. "National Enormity" was not slavery; it was the total destruction of an agrarian way of life and an agrarian people—both white *and* black—who drew their being from it and were rightly distraught at losing it.

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Suspect Company

by Richard M. Gamble

The Oxford Companion to the Bible
Edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan
New York: Oxford University Press; 864 pp., $49.95

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The editors of *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* describe their work as "an authoritative reference for key persons, places, events, concepts, institutions, and realities of biblical times" and as a guide to the current "interpretation of these topics by modern scholars." They present the Bible (the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha) in light of the latest, yet often contradictory, opinions from "anthropology, sociology, and literary criticism," producing a handbook that is "consciously pluralistic" and "inclusive." The *Companion*'s intended audience ranges from the lay reader to ministers and rabbis to academics, although one guesses from its availability in chain bookstores and from various book clubs that it is aimed primarily at the general public.

Compiled by Princeton Seminary's Bruce M. Metzger and Stonehill College's Michael D. Coogan, the *Companion*'s more than 700 entries are the work of Jewish and Christian biblical scholars from 20 countries. The authors rely throughout on the gender-sensitive New Revised Standard version of the Bible

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("Let us make humankind in our image"), and its general tone and content place the *Companion* comfortably within the modernist, skeptical mentality. It proceeds consciously from the Enlightenment tradition, which, as the editors remind the reader, dispensed once and for all with the notion of the Bible as "God's eternal, infallible, and complete word." In line with this presupposition, the *Companion*'s bibliography lacks a single representative from established or recent conservative biblical scholarship, while the articles reach beyond such conventional and expected subjects as "Eden," "Judas," "Frankincense," and "Myrrh" to include such unusual and unexpected ones as "Ecology," "Jung," "Freud," and "Marx." Obviously, the editors' pursuit of diversity took them places the lay reader could not have anticipated.

There is much in the *Companion* to commend. It includes a fine set of maps and a thorough index, and many of the articles are just the sort of thing one looks for in a Bible handbook. For instance, Jacob Neusner's contributions on the Mishnah and Talmud are concise and appropriate, and Professor Metzger's entry on the Bible itself is clear, factual, and impartial, while his "Curious Bibles" is a lively discussion of unusual formats and oddities in printing and translating the Bible over the centuries, such as the scandalous 1631 "Adulterous Bible" that inadvertently dropped the word "not" from the Seventh Commandment. Metzger's articles are so finely turned out that one wishes he had written the entire volume.

In the end, however, the *Companion* fails as a study aid by its inappropriate tone and diction, its trendy views and modernist bias, and its inexplicable inclusions and exclusions. The tone is set from the start by the introduction, which alerts the reader to the fact that the Bible is full of "many repetitions, inconsistencies, and contradictions," and few articles miss an opportunity to reinforce this point. The authors' language is often polemical rather than scholarly and therefore inappropriate for an encyclopedic handbook. The entry under Hagar, for one example among many, judges St. Paul's allegorical use of the Genesis story of Hagar to be "tendentious."

Another problem for the general reader is the *Companion*'s tolerance of unintelligible academic jargon. What is the average student of the Bible to make of such insights as the fact that hyssop was used "in purificatory and apotropaic rituals" or, worse, that widespread literacy in ancient Israel is attributable to "the use of a limited acrophonic system of graphemic representation"? The *Companion*'s contributors often use an annoying, private vocabulary that renames the Crucifixion the "Christ event," the Resurrection the "Easter event," and the infant Church the "post-Easter community." Of course, Jesus never "expected an individual resurrection for himself," his disciples merely had post-Easter "revelatory encounters" with him, and the empty tomb is "an ambiguous fact."

The reader is also treated to an array of fashionable topics, from "Homosexuality" to "Feminism and the Bible" to "Structuralism." Catering to current intellectual appetites, one contributor argues that the Apostle Paul condemned the homosexual act simply because it transgresses "hierarchical gender boundaries" and thereby allows women "to transcend the passive, subordinate role accorded to them by nature" and permits men to forfeit their "superordinate, active role" and sink "to the level of women." Of course the word patriarch has to be eliminated from our lexicon altogether. Under "Patriarchs" the editors offer only a note explaining that the *Companion* uses "the more inclusive terms ancestor(s) and ancestral for the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs." Sorry, Abraham. Other similar concessions to fashion include the claim that Genesis's supposed obsession with procreation "reflects the vigorous pronatalist worldview" prominent when the Old Testament was written. And more than two double-column pages are devoted to "Structuralism," initiating the reader into the occult world of "deep structures" and textual meanings lurking beneath "the surface of the empirical manifestations." Employing this approach, the article on women contemplates the Bible's "unspoken political or rhetorical subtexts." Entries of this sort guarantee that the *Companion* will soon be dated and, one suspects, quickly become something of a curiosity gathering dust on the shelf.

Additionally, how the editors determined what topics to include and exclude in the first place remains a mystery. Among the longest entries in the *Companion* are the articles on Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Karl Marx, to whom more space is devoted than to "Forgiveness," "Sacrifice," or "Atonement." And the inclusion of these modern prophets draws attention to the fact that other important thinkers are missing entirely. While venerating Sts. Sigmund, Carl, and Karl, the editors confer no such honor on Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, or Edwards, or any other significant theologian for that matter. One can only wonder what absurd criteria omitted these giants of biblical interpretation.

The enticing blurb on the *Companion*'s dust jacket heralds this handbook as "an ideal complement to the Bible, an essential volume for every home and library, the first place to turn for information on the central book of Western culture." But for anyone concerned with the integrity of the Bible and with the survival of the civilization built on that revelation, for anyone who wishes to keep modernism and its deadly skepticism at bay, the *Companion* is the last place to turn. It was largely written by and for people for whom the Bible holds little or no authority, by and for the kind of religious modernists who try to prove how much they know by how little they believe. The contributors and editors would have done well to consider Carl Jung's own lament in 1959 that in this "restless and crazy" age "our Christian doctrine has lost its grip to an appalling extent, chiefly because people don't understand it any more." Unhappily, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* only encourages this fatal detachment from the Bible and its claims upon us.

Richard M. Gamble is a fellow of the Center for the Study of Public Choice at George Mason University.

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Mountain Musings

by Gregory McNamee

Flat Rock Journal
by Ken Carey
San Francisco: Harper San Francisco;
230 pp., $18.00

The Ozark Mountains make up an area that American literature has largely passed by, leaving it the province of folklore and song, of homespun stories that seldom make their way to the lowlands. Ken Carey's fine new book about the region, *Flat Rock Journal*, fills a great void, and not simply because with a literature so tiny it has few peers.

Deep within the briar-tangled Missouri highlands, Carey has spent the better part of the last three decades well. He has raised children without having to worry about guns, gangs, and drugs; he has fed his family largely on food that he has grown in the flourishing gardens of his 80-acre farm, fulfilling the Kentucky farmer-poet Wendell Berry's prescription for a righteous life that too few people in our urban culture can follow. Along the way he has paid careful attention to his surroundings, contemplating the mores of the mountain people (who emerge as far more complex, and far more interesting, than the L'il Abner stereotypes outsiders have long been fed), campaigning against logging companies that clear-cut the Ozarks' old-growth forests without regard for the health of the land, and pondering the mysteries of the universe.

Carey, a born essayist, is especially good at giving us a glimpse of daily reality in the mountains; to his evident dismay, one of these realities is the ratio of reptilian to human life. "Copperheads," he writes, "outnumber people in the Ozarks by such an extraordinary ratio that most of us hope we never learn just what it is. They are not only our most common snake, they are, in all probability, our most common animal. I killed thirty of them in the yard around our house the first summer we lived here, all within a few feet of our living area." The argument wheels; so much killing sets Carey, who leans toward Zen Buddhism, to examine his feelings about life and death, about killing and dying. He eventually arrives at an answer satisfactory to him: "The kill-nothing philosophy is sublime. But in the Ozarks anyone exhibiting so pacific a temperament during summer months would soon be compost." Compost is good for the tomato beds, he admits, but Carey has larger plans for himself and his family. His philosophical excursions on these and other country matters make for thoughtful reading.

Thoughtful, not somber. Carey avoids taking himself too seriously. Indeed, many of his sketches of rural life are a stitch, as a country storyteller's tales should be, as when he recounts an exchange between two old-time dowsers arguing over where to dig a new well for his farm, "critiquing one another's methods, concurring on some points, differing on others, arguing less vehemently as time went on, until at last, they both agreed on a spot." He is just as good in relating his encounter with a suspicious grubstake miner who manages to keep a step ahead of the pursuing Forest Service, from whose holdings he aims to dig up a small, yet always evasive, fortune.

Carey, a Berkeley student in the 1960's, uses his rural vantage to criticize the larger society beyond the Ozarks' gates; those criticisms, however, lack the rancor and illiberality of his youthful bent. Sometimes his observations are quite striking. "Seven years without radio, television, or newspapers made it clear to me that until then I had been living in a world defined by values other than my own, a world of description, handed down to me by family, culture, and the language through which I was taught to filter my impressions." (There: in 50-odd words Carey distills the whole point of Bill McKibben's recent book *The Age of Missing Information*, a sometimes long-winded excursus in media criticism.) Other of Carey's remarks can be a little dippy: "I have many suits, this human dress but one." Fortunately, those lapses are rare.

To judge by his book, Ken Carey has found a true home for himself and his family in this neglected corner of America. In the Ozarks, he notes with satisfaction, poverty becomes a kind of wealth. If the land were easier of access, it would have been stripped bare, like much of the comparatively gentle Appalachians to the east. Poor though they may be, the Missouri highlands have been good to Ken Carey, giving him the footing for an always engaging memoir, full of reverence for nature and the good life in the spirit of Henry David Thoreau—and of William Shakespeare, whose ideal human, like Carey, "Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stone, and good in everything."

Gregory McNamee's most recent book is Gila: The Life and Death of an American River *(Crown).*

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Letter From the Lower Right

John Shelton Reed

Deo Vindice

◆

One day last September I was visited by a couple of guys who were writing a cover story on the South for a Dutch magazine. They had been to Darlington, Tuskegee, Oxford, Charleston, and other shrines of Southern culture, and I was pleased to see that Chapel Hill was still on the list. Over Allen & Son's barbecue we talked about their travels.

They had just come from witnessing a War Between the States reenactment at Flat Rock, North Carolina, they said, and they were struck by the utter seriousness with which reenactors pursue their calling. It is an every-weekend event for many of them, with thousands of dollars spent on uniforms and equipment and travel to battles. My visitors were also impressed with the remarkable authenticity some of these weekend warriors achieve. Many refuse to do anything that their originals could not have done: they sleep on straw, cook vile food over open fires, huddle in leaky canvas tents against the rain. But even in the most scrupulously 19th-century setting some contemporary issues just won't go away. My Dutch friends had met a young woman who's tired of being a camp-follower and bandage-roller and wants to shoot it out with the boys. Women in the military, retroactively.

Now, historically, a few women really did bear arms for Southern independence. Harry Turtledove's science fiction novel *The Guns of the South* makes use of the genuine case of Molly Bean, who fought for two years (and was twice wounded) with the 47th North Carolina. But I gather that Molly could pass for a man, or at least for a boy, and apparently that's not a possibility for this latter-day Janie Reb. She isn't letting that stop her, though: she is muttering about legal action—an option that probably wouldn't be open to her if the Confederacy had won.

Anyway, when I had to confess that, as a matter of fact, I had never been to a reenactment, I could see my credibility evaporating. So when I learned the next week that there was to be one about an hour's drive away from us, I took it as a sign that the time had come for me to fill this hole in my experience. With three visiting English friends, my wife and I set off to see the little-known Battle of Aversboro, originally fought in March 1865, a good way to the south of where we were to witness it.

As we pulled into the makeshift parking area, paid our five dollars to the Confederate-uniformed guard, and took a program from his hoop-skirted assistant, we could see the cantonment, which had been set up that morning. Various Confederate flags—the Stars and Bars, the Stainless Banner, the Battle Flag—fluttered in the breeze over a concession area offering refreshments, souvenirs, and bumper stickers saying things like "Vote Confederate" and "I'd Rather Be Shooting Yankees." I bought a Minie ball to go on my key-ring with the .45 cartridge already there (the gift of a distinguished Southern poet who told me it was a mojo to keep liberals away, but mostly it just causes me problems in airports).

We had missed the Gentlemen's Duel and the Period Fashion Show, but arrived just in time for the Capture and Trial of a Federal Spy, which the program said would take 15 minutes—short work, we reckoned. The spy turned out to be a woman (not a lady, obviously), so Southern chivalry wouldn't allow her to face a firing squad on the spot. To our disappointment, she was just marched off under guard to prison in Raleigh.

Soon the cavalry came jingling by—a score of splendid horses, their riders in an authentically motley assortment of grey and butternut uniforms, most of them with plumed hats à la Jeb Stuart. They rode across the pasture-battlefield and into the woods, to reconnoiter for Sherman's forces, moving up from South Carolina. Meanwhile, the field artillery, distinguished by the red flashes on their natty grey uniforms (too natty for 1865, I thought), wheeled their big gun into place on a knoll overlooking the field. The infantry—50 or 60 men, three young drummer boys, and a couple of officers—marched from the camp to the field, where they knelt for a prayer by the chaplain, then arrayed themselves in three trenches that looked suspiciously like the work of a modern backhoe. The regimental band had set up just down from the artillery, and it struck up a couple of hymns, then "Just Before the Battle, Mother." Several hundred of us spectators were strung out on a line perpendicular to the trenches.

Everything was in place. Now all we needed were some Yankees.

The public address announcer gave us a run-down on the battle we were about to observe: essentially a holding action late in the war, he said, nothing much in the way of strategic significance—in other words, a hell of a place to die, but some folks were fixing to, anyway.

Eventually the Confederate troopers galloped out of the woods to report the enemy's approach. Then a couple of Union horsemen were spotted, before they rode off to deliver *their* report. The crowd was getting restless.

Suddenly, at the edge of the forest, there they were, the blue-belly hordes!

Maybe 20 of them.

It seems there's a problem. Nobody wants to be a Yankee. Even the few who turned out on this afternoon didn't seem very enthusiastic about it. One of them said only, "It's a nasty job, but somebody's got to do it." I read later that reenactments of our Civil War are a big deal in Europe, and they have the same problem, but they've solved it with characteristic finesse: European reenactors are required to be Yankees for several years before they're allowed to be Confederates.

Anyway, back in North Carolina, the federals formed a double line and advanced across the open field toward the first of the three earthworks. This sort of suicidal advance (on a larger scale, of course) just about did the Confederate Army in at Gettysburg, but when the artillery cut loose with a deafening "kaboooom"—no one fell. The Confederates in the forward trench held their fire until the blue line was almost on them, then cut loose with a sheet of flame, a mighty "craa-aack," billows of black-powder smoke—and still no one fell. Just over the hill, I reminded myself, folks were waterskiing on Falls Lake, and I wondered what they made of all the gunfire.

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With loud huzzahs and bayonets fixed, the corporal's guard of Yanks (one of them in a dashing Zouave outfit) charged the trench, broke the green South Carolina militiamen who were manning it and drove them back, then went on to rout the second line and drive *them* back. Meanwhile, off to the side, the equally outnumbered Union horse-soldiers, sabres drawn, were mixing it up inconclusively with the rebel cavalry. By this time dead and wounded Confederates littered the field, but the Yankee boys hadn't yet taken any casualities to speak of. We understood that this was because there weren't any Union soldiers to spare, but still, it was getting embarrassing. As the thin blue line advanced past the dead and dying Confederates toward the third and last of the Confederate trenches, I was reminded of what Reuben Greenberg, the black police chief of Charleston, South Carolina, said when someone asked why he gave one of his officers time off from work to march with the Palmetto Guards. "Well," Chief Greenberg said, "you all have always told me that one boy in grey is worth ten in blue." But it sure wasn't working out that way this particular afternoon, and the crowd was getting uneasy. When the sound of a jet plane was heard through the overcast, someone joked, "At last—air support!"

In the trench waited the rebs who had successfully withdrawn from the forward works and those who had been held in reserve all along. So far the Yankees had been invincible, but now at last they would be allowed to die for their country. From 20 feet away they took a volley head on. Then another. As the crowd cheered, they crumpled like tissue paper.

Through all of this, the band had been playing jaunty airs. Now they struck up "Dixie," then "The Bonny Blue Flag." As the Confederates came out of the trench to recover their wounded, one paused to examine a fallen Yankee. "Take his shoes!" a woman next to me shouted.

Afterwards we wandered around the camp, where we watched the amiable fraternization between Blue and Grey. We bought some sarsaparilla, on tap at one of the sutlers' wagons, and looked around the hospital tent, where a medical student from East Carolina University had set up his array of antique bonesaws and other fearsome implements. Someone introduced me to Wolfgang Dresser, a young man who has achieved some fame in reenacting circles for his devotion to the Cause. Every year Herr Dresser comes over from Germany for a month's vacation, going from one reenactment to another, serving as a Confederate private. What I want to know is, where were these guys when we needed them?

My wife overheard one Confederate private telling another that there was a Pizza Hut a couple of miles down the road. (When she said "Pizza Hut?" he grinned and, turning to his buddy, said, "Say, I saw me a dead mule back yonder. Looks like mighty good eatin' tonight!") But others took their cuisine more seriously. A naval unit up from the coast (with their boat on a trailer) was cooking cabbage and field peas in a big iron pot. The jolly jack tars had fought as infantry that day, but back in camp they were sailors again and proudly showed us their guns and "torpedoes" (mines). They explained that everything on the boat was authentic except the modern life-jackets and radio equipment required by the U.S. Coast Guard. I reflected that a Confederate Coast Guard probably wouldn't have meddled.

It was getting late, we were getting hungry (and for something better than cabbage and field peas), so our English friends bought one last souvenir and we hit the road. A good day's work. The Yankee advance had been thwarted, however temporarily. There was still hope.

* * *

At lunch a few days later with an academic crowd, I was telling my companions about the afternoon, and how—well, "interesting" was the word my English friends had used, and that's exactly right—how *interesting* it was.

"I don't know," one of the others said. "Didn't you find it just a little—well, you know."

Unfortunately I did, but I wanted to make him say it. I asked him what he meant.

"Well," he said, "wasn't it sort of a redneck crowd?"

I told him, first, not really and, second, I don't have anything against rednecks, and we let the subject drop, by tacit mutual consent. But I wish I hadn't.

Look, what I saw was a bunch of guys out having a good time—shooting guns, riding horses, camping out, praying—and a few hundred citizens like me, who enjoyed watching them do it.

Sure, most of the Confederate reenactors seemed to be Southern patriots, and many of them were doing homage to their ancestors. My questioner may have a problem with that, but I don't.

As for racism, which I take to be the real subtext of that question—well, one of my English friends was sniffing about for that, too. He was somewhat taken aback by one woman's battle-flag T-shirt that said "Heritage, Not Hate," but relieved when the P.A. announcer concluded a list of American wars with "Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Los Angeles." He has been in American academic life long enough to know that opposition to burning and looting is just a mask for racism.

For my part, though, I was struck with the fact that my English friend had to do some decoding to conclude that we had fallen among bigots. I mean, when small-town and rural white Southerners have racist thoughts we're notorious for not keeping them to ourselves, and I didn't hear any overtly racist talk all day. I did hear some strictures directed at the junior senator from Illinois, but, after all, she started it.

No, the senator would not have been well-received, in the unlikely event she had chosen to make an appearance that afternoon. On the other hand, while it's true (and to my mind perfectly unremarkable) that this was almost entirely a white crowd, I stood for a while near a middle-aged black man, who seemed to be having fun, like everybody else. If he was pulling for the Yankees he kept it to himself, but I don't believe he'd have taken more than good-natured teasing if he'd 'fessed up.

And I wouldn't have hesitated at all to introduce my friend Don to these guys. Don is a Mississippian, now a college professor in Pennsylvania, and he belongs to something called the Sable Arm, an organization with membership limited to direct descendants of black Union soldiers. He's not a reenactor, but some of his friends are. (Where do you think the 54th Massachusetts in the movie *Glory* came from?) If I had taken Don along that afternoon, I'm sure he would have been welcomed — kidded, perhaps, like the Union reenactors, but welcomed. And he'd have understood what was going on a good deal better than your average college professor.

John Shelton Reed writes from Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Flags as Symbols

by Jack Kershaw

At the end of the 60's, the Establishment began a deliberate campaign to destroy a number of American symbols it considered inimical to black welfare. That these symbols—such as the various flags of the Confederate States of America and the song "Dixie"—are revered by a large section of our country for reasons not connected with race or hatred of blacks makes no difference: the liberal Establishment, both black and white, is determined to suppress them. This campaign logically extends to the American flag as well as the Christian cross, because they too are icons whose acceptance is based on tradition and faith. This plan proceeds virulently despite its obvious challenge to the right of free speech as protected by the First and, some say, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

The Establishment has had a measure of success. Its many lawsuits have created new law, sometimes very confusing law, particularly in schools, where presumably the function and significance of symbols are taught, or should be. For instance, students in Louisiana may wear "Freedom Buttons" and "SNIC" buttons; students in Indiana and Iowa may wear black armbands to protest conflicts being actively engaged in by their country; students in Texas may wear brown armbands for the same general purpose; a draftee in a California courthouse may wear a jacket emblazoned with lettering urging an unlikely sex act upon the entire draft board. But a student in Tennessee may not wear a small shoulder-patch replica of the Cross of St. Andrew in memory of his grandfather. The above display of various symbols is liberally condoned by our learned federal courts, but the display of the Southern Cross is forbidden; it might offend, and those offended might become restive and vigorously protest by burning down the town.

As early as 1931, the Supreme Court ruled that "a reproduction of the Flag of Soviet Russia, which was also the flag of the Communist Party in the United States" might properly be flown at a summer camp for children. A pledge of allegiance to "The Workers' Red Flag" in a compulsory morning ritual was also condoned. In a subsequent case the court ruled that a pledge of allegiance to the American flag could not be required in a West Virginia school.

In the flag burning cases of 1989-90 the Court ruled that there was "a perceived need to preserve the [American] flag's status as a symbol of one nation and certain national ideals," including the right of "free expression"; however, "free expression" included the right to burn "national ideals," so convictions of flag burners were reversed and state statutes declared unconstitutional, as was also a later law attempting to protect the "flag as rag," i.e., its "physical integrity." Even this shield is not allowed because of the possible symbolic status present in the burning itself—act becomes symbol.

The latest tactic in the strategy of destruction is the discovery of a new "speech": "government speech," which rapidly becomes "racist government speech" or "discriminatory government speech," and by some mysterious alchemy unsupported by *any* precedent, the Fourteenth Amendment, which is clearly a restriction on the several states and that alone, becomes a power that converts the First Amendment from a restriction on the national or federal government to a restriction on state governments. This is a shocking shell game; so Eastern law journals now refer to the First Amendment as an affirmative authority for the courts to forbid the singing of "Dixie" and any flag associated with the South or her heritage. For a state to fly any semblance of a Southern flag is "racist speech" that chills the "free expression" of a small pack on the fringe of a minority. A small claque is offended. The claque now seeks to use the courts and a newly discovered ogre—"government speech"—to choke the free speech of everybody else in the state. A remarkable contortion—complete censorship of speech (the flag is banned) in the name of "free speech." Once again the courts are used as legislative bodies; judicial usurpation becomes judicial tyranny.

The NAACP and its friends seem to think they are opposing a "flag of rebellion." I think it's fair to point out that the "rebellion," or The War of Northern Aggression upon the original Republic, as represented by the South, ended in 1865 for most folks. The flag now displayed by most Southerners is simply a gesture of respect to our grandparents. Those who fail to understand that are remiss in the use of good manners universally observed. For any group protesting or disagreeing with "speech" in the form of a flag, the proper response is to wave *another* flag—not burn or prohibit our grandfather's. The NAACP needs a black flag, and if it wishes, it needs to get some state to incorporate or adopt it. Try Massachusetts.

Senator Carol Moseley-Braun and her sympathizers see the Confederate flags as symbols of slavery, racism, and prejudice, which are to be hated, spit upon, and trampled in the dust. Braun "does not want to be reminded of slavery." What the senator obviously does not realize is that all the charges she levels at the Confederate flags (the Southern Cross, the Stars and Bars) can likewise be leveled at the Stars and Stripes. She can look at that banner and be reminded of slavery also. Our Revolutionary War flag waved over slaves. The Constitution provided for slavery for seven decades until the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified in 1865.

When the Civil War began, the Union included five slave states (Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri), with a slave population of

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443,983, including Washington, D.C., which had a slave population of 3,185 (U.S. Census, 1860). (West Virginia was calculated by counting the Virginia counties that later comprised West Virginia.) None of these states was required to free its slaves in order to remain in the Union. These slaves were not freed at the beginning of the war or by the Emancipation Proclamation. That noble document freed only slaves in states under *Southern* control—other peoples' slaves. The North kept its slaves until after the war and the Thirteenth Amendment. The household of General Grant enjoyed the service of slaves throughout the war. General Lee owned no slaves. The Federal Army in Nashville bought and trafficked in slaves until the end of 1865—Stars and Stripes slaves. They were used to build railroads, bridges, and forts. In the first years of the war, slaves who escaped from Southern farms were advised to return to their masters (the federals didn't want to feed them), but later in Nashville slaves ("contrabands") who had left their Southern masters were impressed to labor on federal forts (along with whites) and promised pay that was never rendered, whereas slaves who had left *Unionist* masters were returned to the loyalist owners. (In its ceaseless search for grievance, the NAACP and friends can, for a change, here find a valid lawsuit for all that backpay.) The present attack by the modern liberal upon all symbols which suggest that the Old South still endures, and with honor, is based on the assumption that the South is evil and the rest of the country pure.

The 1861 "Army of Liberation" came, in fact, not to free black slaves, but to enslave the South, both blacks and whites. As Bishop-General Leonidas Polk observed in 1861, "All ages and conditions are united [in the South] in one grand and holy purpose of rolling back the desolating tide of invasion, and restoring to the people of the South, that peace, independence, and right of self-government to which they are by nature and nature's God as jointly entitled as those who seek thus to *enslave* them." The North prevailed and the South was enslaved throughout Reconstruction and, in many ways, into the 1930's and beyond.

The issues in 1860 were the right of a state to secede and all the freedoms of 1776. The South feared Lincoln and those around him. Most Southerners felt that the right to own slaves ought to be decided by the states, not by the federal government. Slavery was merely one of the many fields on which a struggle for power between the federal government and the several states—Northern and Southern—took place. The New England states were the first to threaten secession, as early as 1796. Governor Wolcott of Connecticut said, "I sincerely declare that I wish the Northern states would separate from the Southern states the moment that event (referring to the election of Thomas Jefferson) takes place." In 1845 New England threatened secession over the admission of Texas. And don't forget the infamous Hartford convention in 1814. Nullification was used by 11 Northern states before the war, as opposed to only three Southern states. Though Negroes were denied suffrage in the South, so were they denied in all Northern states except five, where Negroes, except for one or two, existed only in books. In the North, Negroes were not given the suffrage until after Grant was safely elected. The Republicans recognized the right of *Northern* states to determine who voted. Negrophobia was prevalent in so many Northern states that the party thought it best not to risk a rebellion of its own states. In most Northern states no blacks voted.

I have sketched the various attitudes of the day regarding secession, nullification, slavery, and voting rights to suggest that a little forbearance might be exercised, lest we condemn too hastily and too widely and make the South the whipping boy for Northern malpractice. Attacks on traditional symbols with no grasp of their meaning, natural or historical or otherwise, is lack of vision.

One last issue has been the source of honest puzzlement to me. Why, in a commercial industrial nation, developed in that direction by the Northeast, where "deals" are contracted everyday and all involve at least two parties, is the South always condemned for having slaves as if they dropped from heaven, or rose from hell, with no human intervention? Slaves were *bought* from the slave traders of New England and from the English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese slave traders, who *bought* them from *Negro* slave traders in Africa. Slavery and slave trading were sanctioned by and blessed in New England. It was saving African souls as well as filling Puritan holds. Not until the slaves were all bought and paid for did slavery become "wrong." Only then was a Northern war of aggression waged and the Southern slaves freed, but not paid, or paid for. Susanne Langer in *Philosophy in a New Key* says that the most intolerable injury one man or group of men can do to another . . . to constrain a man against his principles . . . make a pacifist bear arms, a patriot insult his flag . . . is to endanger his attitude toward the world . . . no matter how fantastic may be the dogmas he holds sacred, it is never a light matter to demand their violation." To attack the symbols under which my grandfather gave his life is indeed not a "light matter." Nor is it a light matter to attempt to tell him (or me) what they "mean." To decide to hate a symbol without knowing its traditional meaning as stated by its originators is puerile and shows a lack of the minimum education necessary for good citizenship.

In Civil War battles, the color bearer was the most exposed soldier on the field. Yet the position was eagerly sought and proudly held. If the color guard was shot, the nearest soldier saved the colors from falling until perhaps he too went down. At Seven Pines, ten of the 11 color guards of the Palmetto South Carolina Regiment Sharp Shooters were wounded or killed, yet the colors passed through many hands without ever touching the ground.

Men of the North and Men of the South both fought and gave blood and life for their flags as symbols of all that they stood for. It is not meet or proper that abolitionists, old or modern, or Klansmen, black or white, should attempt to belittle that which is much larger than they are or may hope to be.

Jack Kershaw is an artist living in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Fear of the Original

by George Watson

The demands of life are endlessly self-contradictory. It is a supreme compliment in intellectual life, for example, to be called original; but it can be alarming to discover something—so alarming that people have been known

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to turn tail and run when they do. To take a philosophical instance: Leibniz, as Bertrand Russell tells in his *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), did work on mathematical logic that "would have been enormously important, if he had published it." But he refrained, out of fear and modesty:

> He abstained from publishing because he kept on finding evidence that Aristotle's doctrine of the syllogism was wrong on some points; respect for Aristotle made it impossible for him to believe this, so he mistakenly supposed that the errors must be his own.

That sounds amiable, and anyone in higher education at either end of the scale, whether as a student or as a teacher, must occasionally know how Leibniz felt. Can one really be the first to have thought of something, or the first to have noticed something? "My first instinct when I have an idea," a literary colleague once told me, "is to feel sorry for it." I have seen graduate students with years of research behind them look utterly incredulous on hearing that something they have just said or written is both true and new. It would be a highly exceptional thesis-writer in the humanities who, in his heart of hearts, did not believe that everything important had already been said.

That, to be sure, is not something to proclaim. For one thing, it would be damaging to the status of the subject as a whole; for another, damaging to the pretensions of the student. But it is potent in the way unspoken assumptions often are, and one can see why. A glance at the shelves of books there already are on Michelangelo or Shakespeare or George Eliot is usually enough to persuade a beginner—and not only beginners, sometimes—that if anything was worth saying it must by now have been said. That assumption seems to afflict radicals no less than conservatives in practice, and the noisy nonconformists of campus life no less than the intellectually cautious or the temperamentally demure. In fact it has nothing to do with politics. Originality, to many minds, is next door to impossible, in which case anything you think you have found must be either familiar or wrong. Either it is not what you thought or it has already been said.

There is a famous story from the ancient world that illustrates that the fear of originality is nothing new. Herodotus in his *History* tells how a shipload of Phoenicians sailed around the southern tip of Africa, starting in the Red Sea and taking two years—putting into land as autumn came to sow their crops and harvest them in the spring, passing the Cape and returning north and home by way of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean. But as they sailed westward in the Southern Hemisphere, says Herodotus, they said what many believe—though I do not—that as they sailed around Africa they had the sun on their right hand. The remark now provokes only a smile, and Herodotus's fear of originality may not have delayed cosmology in the way Leibniz's delayed mathematical logic. But he refused to accept what others had seen and reported, because he thought it too odd to be credited.

The dilemma is familiar. On the one hand, the researcher wants to look original; on the other, he does not want to look crazy or deviant. The young researcher, above all, can be plagued by that dilemma, and his natural ambition to look original is often nervously bounded by peer pressure—by the thought that if he suggests anything seriously new he may lose friends and fail to influence people whose good opinion may count. The cult of originality, in other words, is a cult of a socially acceptable originality; one can be afraid of not being original and afraid of being original at the same time; and those who say they are eager to do research and discover something have secretly hedged that aspiration with all sorts of unspoken qualifications. New, but not too new; original, but only in a manner conformable to the fashion of the times. The noisiest radical, after all, is often a secret conformist, and to be a neo-Marxist in the 1960's, a feminist in the 1970's, or a multiculturalist since then takes hardly any courage at all. In fact, real courage would lie in thinking and declaring something else.

To be a successful sage, like Jean-Paul Sartre in his day or Umberto Eco in ours, is to move with the stream even as you appear to move against it, and no bones were broken as they preached existentialism, in Sartre's day, or the indeterminacy of the text. Like deconstruction, or gender studies, these were always harmless drawing-room radicalisms. They called for no down-payment, no damaging change of behavior, and no expenditure—none, at least, out of one's own funds. Compared with the calling of the Apostles, say, or Islamic fundamentalism, originality in that style was always comfortable and costless. Even revolution, in those days, was supposed to cause no disruption to the usual flow of three meals a day. If Marxism was a religion, then on the campuses of the Western world it was religion made easy.

Perhaps this would be a good moment to reexamine the seemingly self-contradictory cult of originality. It is notable, in academic circles, that to call someone an original thinker is to bestow the ultimate accolade, just as "unoriginal" represents a curt dismissal. ("Wholly unoriginal" would be the ultimate term of dismissal, and it could easily imply that there was absolutely nothing favorable to be said.) But that may be based on a series of false analogies. If original means unique and right, there are certainly areas of human understanding in which the cult of originality is sensible. In mathematics and the physical sciences, for example, it is natural to acclaim originality and award it prizes, and the Nobel Committee would rightly demand nothing less; in morality and the arts, however, that is not so clear. Shakespeare never invented a plot, unless the plot of *The Tempest*, for which no narrative source has ever been found, was his; but he is not usually thought of as lacking in inventive powers.

There are plenty of good stories, after all, and plenty of moral wisdom. In the second *Rambler* essay (March 24, 1750), Samuel Johnson remarked that "men more frequently require to be reminded than informed," and he would probably have agreed that an original moral intuition which is also true would be a wild improbability. The ensuing era tried to prove him wrong and failed, and the original moral intuitions of the 19th century, such as those of Comte, Marx, and Nietzsche, have worn rather badly, which might be thought to bear out Johnson's point. Propositions like "All history is class war," for example, or Disraeli's "All is race," have long since faded for lack of supporting evidence. Nor has the 20th century, for all its strenuous artistic avant-gardism, managed to create and sustain a single new literary genre, which should surely surprise us more than it does. The case for saying that a great artist must be radically original, then, cannot be made: not, at least, without a lot of awkward qualifications. Art is not like science. Why, then, do we ask of the

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artist that he should be original?

One way to answer that question would be to consider what qualifications would make the demand of artistic originality look plausible. A musicologist once remarked that the most boring music was either wholly familiar or wholly unfamiliar. That at least lays down some of the ground rules of the debate. Wholly familiar music like a classic symphony needs to be refreshed by new performances, or it bores; wholly unfamiliar music, like Arab music to a Western ear, is boring for a reverse reason, being totally meaningless. In the world of the humanities, and perhaps in the world of moral choices too, an acceptable originality would belong to the middle range of things: new, but not too new; fresh, but familiar too.

That makes timidity about total originality, like the timidity of Herodotus or Leibniz, seem understandable. Nobody wants to be a crank, after all, and nobody wants to be unintelligible. Audacious authors have been known to disclaim originality as an embarrassment: "I bring here no new discoveries," Montaigne wrote in one of his *Essais*. "These are common ideas; and having perhaps thought of them a hundred times, I fear I may already have set them down." Since the essays, which are mostly about himself, represent the first attempt by a European to publish an extensive account of his own ego, Montaigne's fear of originality is excusable, and the mountains of classical allusions that shore up his arguments confirm an entirely natural anxiety to claim an ancestry for what he is about. Christian humanists like Montaigne, Shakespeare, or Johnson believed that everything worth saying about the human condition, at least in bold outline, had already been said: so disclaimers of originality are well in order here.

That view conferred upon the commonplace a dignity which to the present century may look paradoxical. In his study of Thomas Gray, for example, Johnson commended Gray's "Elegy" because it "abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo." The poem is great by being commonplace, though Johnson was too good a critic to suppose that the proposition is reversible and that everything commonplace is great. It is striking that his next sentence appears, but *only* appears, to contradict what he has just implied:

> The four stanzas beginning "Yet even these bones" are to me original: I have never seen the notion in any other place; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them.

A moment's reflection, however, shows that this is self-consistent. Johnson is not arguing that the stanzas are original in substance, but merely that he cannot recall a precedent; he commends them as a truth already familiar outside literature and, in any case, true to life. How, after all, could there be a truth of life that was not already known, even if (by some odd chance) nobody had yet supposed it to be worth writing down?

The thought is teasing. In the spring of 1993, a number of British journals commissioned articles by middle-aged ex-militants to celebrate, or at least to mark, the 25th anniversary of that revolutionary moment of students in the Western world, the spring of 1968. As might have been expected, a striking and significant pattern of conformity emerged. All of them are now in well-paid jobs. All made it clear, as they recalled their years since leaving the colleges where they had spent their militant youth, that their hatred of private wealth had never been personal. All of them had seized the first opportunity for acquiring wealth. All spoke of the impulse to militancy as being the lack of intellectual cohesion that had depressed them in their freshman year, of an instant hunger for a doctrine that, like Marxism, appeared to make sense of a confusing multiplicity of facts. The charm of militancy was linked to the fear of originality; it offered a quick way out of the rat's maze of texts and meta-texts, of historical revisions and re-revisions, of rival critical interpretations. Its charm was that it was simple and certain. To fear originality is to fear that, in the study of detail, one might discover something. How much more comfortable, then, to suppose that a 19th-century sage had found the key already.

The point about the profound conservatism of Marxism has already been made, by a philosopher. In *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957) Sir Karl Popper, writing as an ex-Marxist and pointedly dedicating his book, which appeared shortly after the deaths of Hitler and Stalin, to their millions of victims, attacked the notion, ancient and modern, that there are immutable laws of history that make the future predictable. To predict knowledge is to have it, and if one has it then it is not predicted. His book ends with an attack on modern historicists, or partisans of doctrines of immutable laws, that has lost none of its force over the years:

> To present such a venerable idea as bold and revolutionary betrays . . . an unconscious conservatism. It may be the historicists who are afraid of change,

since they strive to compensate for the loss of an unchanging world "by clinging to the belief that change can be foreseen because it is ruled by an unchanging law." The deeper impulses of Marxism were conservative, in other words, and the real conservatives among us are those who swallowed it. They cannot bear to believe that the world might change naturally and of itself rather than by immutable laws, and change in unpredictable ways.

Originality is therefore alarming, above all, to revolutionaries. In the arts, by contrast, it is little better than incoherent or hard to make sense of, not least in an age like the present, which, for the first time in human memory, lacks an artistic avant-garde and is suddenly skeptical of dogmas claiming to be new and true. Perhaps there is still a word to be said for moral and artistic originality, even after two millennia and more of Western civilization, though by now it cannot be much of a word. One might, after all, be original without seeking to be so. "True originality," Jean Cocteau told the French Academy in 1955 when they belatedly elected him a member, "consists of trying to behave like everybody else without succeeding." That sounds attractive, and what is more it happens. I once cooked myself a delicious and (in my experience) wholly unique omelette for lunch, but since I was thinking about something else at the time I still do not know what went into it, though I ate it with awe and admiration. Columbus never knew he had discovered America. Montaigne energetically denied originality. Shakespeare, it seems fair to suppose, had never heard of the requirement, and Johnson thought it an objection in a work of art.

That leaves moral and artistic originality looking marginal, at best, and the

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fear of originality largely irrelevant. Why fear what you cannot have? This cannot be a truth for all times, but merely for an age like ours that is old. Someone, after all, must once have discovered that slavery was wrong—an original moral thought, though it cannot be attributed. Someone, equally unattributed, must have invented drama, someone the novel. Someone invented the wheel. But what is done is done. Discovery, in its nature, is finite, and Columbus was lucky as well as bold: since 1492 there have been no more terrestrial continents left to be found.

The conclusion is not depressing. It would be selfish to regret the invention of the wheel in order to win fame and fortune by inventing it now. Perhaps it would be equally absurd to regret that there are no more artistic forms to be invented or moral truths to be found.

George Watson is a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and the author of The Literary Critics, The Certainty of Literature, *and* British Literature Since 1945 *(St. Martin's Press).*

LIBERAL ARTS

'STANFORD' MADE THE MISTAKES

Former Stanford University President Donald Kennedy, who resigned in 1992 amid the university's indirect cost scandal, is now teaching a course in ethics. The new seminar, entitled "Professional Responsibility and Academic Duty," is designed to teach future professors and administrators how to handle ethical questions, reported the *San Francisco Chronicle* late last year.

Although Kennedy's own ethics were called into question when the United States government charged that Stanford had misused millions of dollars in federal research funds, the biology professor said he doesn't "see any irony about what happened and my offering this course. Nobody's found anybody who is ethically deficient here. All of us admitted that Stanford had made some mistakes. . . . We were confronted with a changing standard. I don't think anyone here is ethically compromised."

POLITICS

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Untimely Death of Vice President Hobart

by Harlow A. Hyde

Little does history remember the death of Vice President Garret Augustus Hobart at the tender age of 55, barely a month before the beginning of the present century. Yet we have cause to lament that, in the words of the Psalmist, this humble personage was not granted a span of 70, or even 80, years. For it can be shown that his premature death loosed an unprecedented series of tragic and evil consequences. The legacy of Hobart's early demise was an onslaught of carnage, sorrow, and suffering, the likes of which the world had theretofore neither seen nor dared to imagine.

It is a strange and little-known fact of history that most of the calamities that have befallen humanity during the present century stem directly from Hobart's death on November 21, 1899. That this obvious cause-and-effect relationship has not been widely acknowledged is a sad but telling commentary on the competence of modern historians. To correct this oversight a new outlook on the present era is needed, one that will correct the record and explain how and why our much-boasted civilization went awry during the past 90 years.

The first and most obvious outcome of Hobart's death was the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. With his previous Vice President dead, President McKinley needed a running mate in 1900. Theodore Roosevelt, through the contradictory actions of his political friends and enemies, was launched as the new candidate for Vice President. Ipso facto, upon the assassination of William McKinley, Roosevelt became President.

At first blush it does not seem that the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt should be considered a "disaster." On the contrary, according to the "conventional wisdom," Theodore Roosevelt was one of our greatest Presidents. In some respects this is undoubtedly so. Nevertheless, Roosevelt made one tragic and completely unforgivable error which completely negates the virtues that history credits to his account.

Unfortunately for the country and eventually the world, Roosevelt had a fatal character flaw: he loved a good fight, even from afar. Ever captive of his animal instincts, the impetuous young President was eager to embroil the United States in the war between Russia and Japan. Roosevelt offered to mediate a peace treaty, the two combatants agreed, and the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth was the result. At about the same time, Roosevelt needlessly involved the United States in a nasty quarrel between France, Britain, and Germany over the future of Morocco.

Never mind that for these efforts Roosevelt was awarded the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize, for there are two reasons why Roosevelt's so-called "positive" (read meddling) foreign policy was the first great mistake of the 20th century. First, it set a precedent that the United States would henceforth be willing to stick its nose into Europe's and Asia's disputes and civil wars. Second, we earned Germany's distrust and Japan's lasting enmity for our trouble. Japan's animosity toward the United States festered and grew for the next 35 years and culminated with the attack on Pearl Harbor. Japan came away from the Portsmouth negotiations with the firm conviction that the United States had helped Russia cheat her out of a large monetary indemnity. And, as she did in 1945, Japan vowed not to get mad, but instead to get even.

With the precedent now set (one that would haunt future generations), we can turn to Big Bill Taft's titanic-sized mistake. But first let's see how the presidency of William Howard Taft was another result of the death of Garret Augustus Hobart. In 1908, Theodore

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Roosevelt handpicked Taft to be his successor. Roosevelt was so popular and powerful that he could have put virtually anyone in the White House in 1909. He was idiosyncratic enough to select Bill Taft, probably because the lethargic Taft would never have had enough ambition to seek the job on his own initiative. In reality Taft was a good President and a fine man. His reputation has suffered merely because his term was sandwiched between two supposedly great Presidents: that "damned cowboy" Teddy Roosevelt and the tiresome and self-righteous Calvinist Woodrow Wilson.

Taft made only *one* of history's "great mistakes," but it was more than enough. Taft's error was that he supported the idea of the personal income tax and was the prime advocate of the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The amendment is only one sentence (30 words), but it changed the basic nature of our Republic forever. Beginning in 1913, Congress could legally tax personal incomes. Suddenly the potential for exponentially increased riches for the government's coffers was at hand, and history clearly demonstrates that politicians will exercise their "divine right to spend" more than they should, buying, or at least attempting to buy, their re-election in the process. Taft could have stopped the income tax, but instead he ardently supported it. The bill authorizing the constitutional amendment was passed in the early months of Taft's presidency, and Taft proudly certified the amendment's final ratification by the 36th state on February 25, 1913, only seven days before he left office.

Poor Taft was doomed to serve only one term as President because he wouldn't take his marching orders from Theodore Roosevelt. TR at first tried to let Taft be Taft, but physical dimensions aside, there really wasn't much that was presidential about the jolly walrus. Before long Teddy, who, as his uppity daughter Alice once said, "had to be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral," couldn't leave well enough alone. Soon the former friends became bitter enemies.

The outcome of this blood feud within the Republican Party was the election of Woodrow Wilson. TR tried to wrestle the Republican nomination away from Taft in 1912, but the Republicans were not about to cashier an incumbent President. So in a fit of childish petulance TR formed the Progressive "Bull Moose" Party and ran as a third-party candidate against both Wilson and Taft. Together Roosevelt and Taft garnered 7,610,000 votes to 6,286,000 votes for Wilson. However, since the Republicans split their vote among two candidates, Wilson was the victor. Thus, the death of Hobart led to Roosevelt in 1901, who then anointed Taft in 1909, which in turn resulted in Woodrow Wilson's inauguration in 1913.

Woodrow Wilson made *three* mistakes, and, in addition, unknowingly altered history by appointing a Hyde Park blue blood, one Franklin D. Roosevelt, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. But in this essay we are only interested in Wilson's really big mistakes.

First, Wilson quickly had Congress pass legislation implementing the income tax that had been handed to him on a silver platter by his Republican predecessor. With this new ability to extract billions from the populace, it was possible for Wilson to build up the American military. Wilson talked a mighty good peace with his high-flown and hypocritical rhetoric of being "neutral in thought as well as deed." In 1916, Wilson ran for reelection on the "He kept us out of the war" platform, but he cleverly played both sides of the street by also advocating "preparedness." Wilson was an ardent supporter of the two great war preparations bills to expand the Army and Navy, which his toadies pushed through Congress in the summer of 1916. These measures insured that by April 1917, when Wilson called Congress into special session to declare war, the United States already had a good start on building the armed forces it would need to go to war against Germany.

So warmongering was the first of Wilson's great errors. He dragged his nation into Europe's civil war, with the result that over 100,000 of our fine young boys never came home. It was Wilson, that imperious, idealistic, know-it-all Wilson who set the precedent that the United States would willingly, if not eagerly, send millions of its best men across the oceans to fight in the Old World's civil wars. It was the same ninny Wilson who convinced the nation to turn its back on our traditional policy of letting Europe have the privilege of settling its own messes. Because of Wilson the United States had the pleasure of experiencing firsthand the carnage of both World War I and World War II.

One could even say that Hobart's death also led to the deaths of countless thousands in the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. This forgotten pandemic killed about 675,000 Americans in the ten months from September 1918 through June 1919. Note that the combined battle deaths of U.S. forces in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam total only 423,000. Unlike usual attacks of influenza, this virus did not concentrate on killing the very young and very old. It was most often fatal to young men in their prime, for reasons science has never understood. Conditions in the armed services were perfect for spreading the disease: the cheek-by-jowl living of the ramshackle military camps, the trains that were used to deliver troops throughout the nation, the sardine-like conditions on troop ships at sea, the munitions plants that brought millions out of their homes into daily contact with the multitudes, even the crowded public places where men were required to report for induction. Yes, Woodrow Wilson's war was the perfect means of insuring that in short order the plague was distributed far and wide, evenly and rapidly across the continent. In 1918, we could not properly fight both the plague and the war. So, in keeping with the hoary philosophy that individual deaths are tragedies but thousands are just statistics, the war was considered more important. Lives be damned, the military effort continued unabated, while the disease completed its lethal work under ideal government-approved conditions.

If the United States had had the good sense to let the Europeans fight their own fight in 1917, the world undoubtedly would have been spared the suffering and carnage caused by communism. By the summer of 1917, Germany had already knocked Russia out of the war, and in short order the Germans would have done away with Lenin and his lackeys. The Russian Civil War, the 1920 war between Poland and Russia, the great crimes of Stalin, the communists' intentional starvation of millions in the Ukraine in the 1930's, the genocide against the Kulaks, World War II, the Iron Curtain, the *gulag*, the nuclear arms race, the Cold War, the Korean War, the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War, and all the other plagues and terrors that the world has reaped as a result of communism during the last 75 years—all perhaps could have been

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avoided if only Woodrow Wilson had simply kept his nation out of the war, which Wilson promised to do with nauseating regularity while he was running for reelection.

But as if two great mistakes were not enough for one President, Wilson's blind crusade to "make the world safe for democracy" also led to a third mistake. In financing the Great War, Wilson set a precedent whereby the United States government would borrow billions of dollars but never retire the debts, thereby legitimizing the concept of a large and permanent national debt. Thus, Wilson was the first President to permanently mortgage the future of his country. The United States had had to borrow billions of dollars to fight its previous wars, and indeed the cost of the Civil War was proportionately much larger than the cost of World War I. But after all earlier wars the country had worked diligently to repay the debts. Not after World War I. When Woodrow Wilson took office the national debt was less than 1.2 billion dollars. Before Wilson left office it hit $26.6 billion. Wilson executed and buried for all time the precious policy that, except in rare circumstances, the federal government would not spend more than it takes in.

By 1920 the country was sick, both literally and figuratively, of Woodrow Wilson. His interventionist philosophy and strident preaching about what was supposedly good for the country and good for the world had exasperated people. The country was ready and willing, if not straining at the leash, to get shed of other peoples' troubles. About any Republican for President would do.

Warren Harding filled the bill perfectly. Without a doubt, Harding was the closest thing to a perfect cipher to ever occupy the White House. But at least Warren Harding, unlike Theodore Roosevelt or William Howard Taft or Woodrow Wilson, never made any big mistakes. Frankly, the corruption of Harding's appointees as well as Harding's philandering "on the side" can be overlooked. The country has always been able to survive a few shysters in high office lining their pockets, and the nation is not really harmed just because it has a President whose main hobby stems from an excessive fondness for the opposite sex. These time-honored vices are infinitely preferable to those of so-called "good" Presidents who needlessly embroil their country in other nations' disputes, Presidents who impose gargantuan new taxes, Presidents who send millions of American boys to die fighting other nations' wars, or Presidents who send the nation irrevocably down the road to fiscal ruin. No, the plain truth is that all the critical mistakes of this century were made by the troika of "leaders" who followed in the wake of the untimely death of Garret Augustus Hobart.

I confess that a few years ago, while researching the history of my family, I uncovered an ugly skeleton. It seems that in 1911, over 35 years before I was born, my paternal grandfather Charles L. Hyde was convicted of mail fraud and sentenced to 15 months in the federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas. Grandfather appealed but lost. But he did obtain a stay so that he could apply to President Taft for a pardon. Many months passed with no word.

Finally, Grandpa was ordered to surrender to the federal prison in Kansas by March 5, 1913. On March 3, Grandpa stood on the train platform in Pierre, South Dakota. His wife Katherine and their five children were on hand to see him sent to prison. With only minutes to spare, Grandpa's lawyer ran up with a telegram: "President Taft has pardoned you!" It seems that President Taft, who had a nose for seeing justice done, referred Grandpa's request to the U.S. Attorney General for review. However, for a long time Attorney General Wickersham didn't check into it. Finally, Wickersham tended to the matter, and the result was that President Taft signed the paper granting Grandpa's pardon on the last working day of his term.

On page 352 of the 1913 annual report of the U.S. Attorney General, Grandpa's case is summarized as follows: "It seems that whatever dissatisfaction arose among the investors was created by a circular letter sent out by a discharged employee of the petitioner. . . . The misrepresentations when investigated dwindled to such a degree that the Attorney General was satisfied petitioner had done nothing to deserve a prison sentence." Thus, due to the untimely death of Garret Augustus Hobart, the nation got Teddy Roosevelt, and only because of Roosevelt did William Howard Taft become President. And it's only because of Taft that the country has the benefit of Harlow A. Hyde. Why? Because if Taft hadn't been President my Grandpa would have gone to prison, and I know my mother would *never* have married the son of a convict!

Harlow A. Hyde writes from Lincoln, Nebraska.

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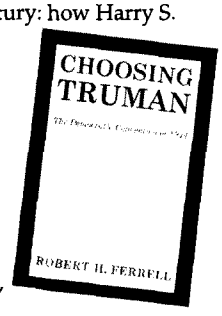

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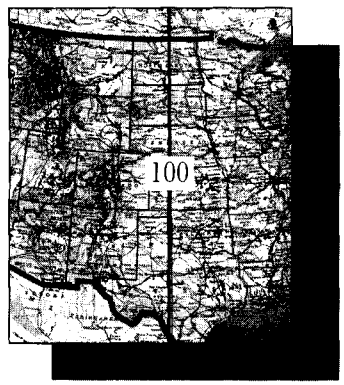
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

29,000 Leaseholders

The war on the West is not going badly—from a Westerner's point of view. As of mid-February, salient victories included the successful filibuster, by Western senators, of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's range reform bill; the routing of the obnoxious Representative Mike Synar (Democrat-OK), the congressional instigator of "reform"; the firing of the arrogant Jim Baca from his job as Director of the Federal Bureau of Land Management; and Secretary Babbitt's decision to adopt less confrontational strategies in the future, such as the creation of local grazing committees composed of ranchers, environmentalists, and recreationists. Best of all, the doughty Commander in Chief of the federal troops, panicked by the unaccustomed sound of heavy artillery, the unfamiliar smell of cordite, and the terrifying sight of blood is, like the Duke of Plaza Toro, leading his regiment from behind. In the din of battle, a modest and seemingly innocuous pronouncement by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation—that, after 92 years in the business of impounding and diverting free-flowing rivers, it has no plans to build more dams—went virtually unremarked, even in the West where the great majority of its former projects were constructed. Still, this quiet bureaucratic event may in time have a greater impact on the American West than any number of land-use reforms could ever have. As the fact sinks in, it is likely to strike millions of Westerners with intimations of disaster. Others, more farsighted, may see in it the makings of regional salvation.

Historically, the West's case for greater autonomy has been compromised by its being, unlike the Old South, substantially an economic creation of the federal government and of Eastern capital. Purchased from a foreign nation by congressional authorization and with federal funds, the region and its aborigines were subdued by federal forces while its settlers, most of them socially small potatoes and poor as Job's turkey, had to be subsidized in their enterprise by Congress and capitalized by the same powerful paleface interests they had sought to escape in the first place. The



winning of the West, it could truthfully be said, was not accomplished by Westerners alone; rather it was a national effort, like the later Civil Rights Revolution, the War on Poverty, and the Battle Against AIDS. So when the Sagebrush Rebellion broke out a decade and a half ago and the rebels appeared to be staring around for their own Fort Sumter to shell, little more was required to make them look foolish than for "conservatives" like George Will to remind them haughtily that they were effectively squatters on land belonging to All the People, poor relatives camped out in a field behind the Big House. Eastern commentators noted that water development in the arid West was entirely the work of the federal government, paid for by All the Taxpayers without whose largesse there would scarcely be any Western settlement at all. It was even meanly suggested that conservative Westerners, ever contemptuous of national welfarism, as water welfarists were actually its greatest beneficiaries. There is enough truth in both of these claims to hurt, and more than enough to give honest Westerners and their apologists pause for sober reflection.

A massive federal irrigation program was not the idea of the early settlers who arrived on the arid highlands west of the Hundredth Meridian in response to the Homestead Act, the Desert Lands Act, the Timber and Stone Act, the Swamp and Overflow Act—attempts by Congress to deny (and to encourage Western settlers to deny) the fact, plain to anyone who had ever set foot in the Dakotas or in Utah and Colorado and Wyoming territories (of course hardly any congressman had), that the almost unbelievable superabundance of land was matched by the equally incredible absence of water. Major John Wesley Powell, the one-armed Civil War veteran who in 1869 led the Powell Geographic Expedition in four wooden dories down the Green River from the town of Green River, Wyoming, to Grand Wash Cliffs at the confluence of the Colorado and Virgin rivers, perceived at once that the land rush being stimulated by the government and encouraged by every sort of lying and unscrupulous entrepreneur would turn into a Gadarene marathon unless the problem of apportioning settlement in accordance with the available water were tackled head on and in a responsible manner. In his *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region of the United States, with a More Detailed Account of the Lands of Utah* and in his subsequent testimony before Congress concerning the report, he insisted that only a small fraction of the Western lands was irrigable; that the irrigable parts were restricted almost entirely to riparian areas; and that, even so, the cost of building dams, reservoirs, and irrigation systems would be affordable only by the federal government, which would either have to take care of the job or watch the Western migration founder. (Powell argued further that state boundaries should be surveyed around watersheds—what environmentalists today call "ecosystem management"—while settlers ought to be encouraged to hold lands in common on the plan of the Mexican *eijido*, for the purposes of minimizing the fencing of the open range and maximizing the efficient use of water.) Though he managed to procure short-term funding for an irrigation survey, Powell's ideas were anathema in an era of fortune-seekers, territorial boosters, professional and commercial optimists, land-grab artists, and self-styled rugged individualists eager to proclaim that they had no need of federal charity. This spirit of manly independence failed to withstand the droughts—predicted by Powell—of the final decades of the 19th century and was knocked down for the count by those of the 1930's: almost overnight, federal irrigation projects struck everyone as the obvious solution to the West's water problem, these to be built for—but *not* paid for by—the legions of yeomen farmers beholden to nobody. "The result," Marc Reisner says

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in his magisterial *Cadillac Desert*, "was a half-century rampage of dam-building and irrigation development which, in all probability, went far beyond anything Powell would have liked." It was also the ingenious Rube Goldberg system of reservoirs, aqueducts, canals, and tunnels without which half or more—perhaps much more—of the present population west of the Mississippi River would be living east of it instead. Unlike the South of a century and a half ago, the West is only by artifice a self-sustaining region; only after the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers have done their worst is it capable of feeding itself (thanks to California, which is no longer, culturally and politically speaking, a Western state). Take out its water system and it would starve to death. At least its cities would. In particular the cities of Southern California and Arizona.

To this extent the population of the West is indeed living beyond its means, for which it has substituted Eastern handouts. Clever of the government, cynics and conspiratorialists might say: exactly what was required to bind all those millions of square miles, rich in oil and gas and minerals and timber, potential bombing ranges and concentration camps for Medicare recipients, to the federal treasury. The truth is that Washington, for the past nine decades, has dedicated itself to creating water welfarites, willing or unwilling, as deliberately and ruthlessly as it has made crack and food-stamp addicts for the past three. Far better than the beneficiaries of its programs, it knew what it was doing—rolling pork-barrels and buying votes; more than they, it bears the moral responsibility for their corruption. For 90 years the federals have paid farmers to grow crops where no crops should be grown, subsidized ranchers to graze their animals in numbers for which permits ought never to have been written. Now Washington, responding to pressure from Eastern skiers, backpackers, mountaineers, beautiful people, and second-home builders, has changed its mind: it wants the West back, for itself. And for millions of other people transplanted to the exploding cities of the West where they seek "a better quality of life"—and soak up the critical paucity of water that remains here.

A national administration sincerely concerned for the Western "environment" would pay relatively little attention to the sheep and cattle men, the wheat and alfalfa growers of the Rocky Mountain region, and concentrate both its attention and its bully-boy methods on the corporate CEOs busily relocating themselves and their employees from the East and from California to intermountain metropolitan areas that as much as 25 or 30 years ago were already straining their fragile desert surroundings and intricate natural water systems, which, in the basin-and-range West, may be only a few miles away. It is the cities that are primarily responsible for creating environmental distress, but nobody has ever dared tell Americans where they may and may not live, not even when their choice must be subsidized by tens of billions of dollars of public money from somewhere else. The result, in our complacently hubristic society, is a municipality of 12 million people trapped in a strip of desert between the Pacific Ocean and a mountain range and entirely dependent for its survival on water electrically sucked and pumped through aqueducts arriving from hundreds of miles away. The Colorado River system, so oversubscribed by water-rights holders that it enters the Gulf of California as a literal trickle, is the victim not of irrigators in the largely rural Upper Basin states of Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado but of the downstream megalopoli of Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson, San Diego, and Los Angeles, of agriculture in southern Arizona, and of industrial agriculture in the great valleys of Southern California (most of it serving as a lucrative tax write-off for Union Pacific, Prudential Life, and other corporate behemoths) that are draining and destroying a watershed encompassing eight states. Days after he was fired from the BLM, Jim Baca sneered that the Clinton administration had backed off from its grazing reform program after being confronted by "29,000 [grazing] leaseholders." My guess is John Wesley Powell, prophet that he was, would have understood that the problem today is *not* 29,000 leaseholders; it is two million Denverites, a half-million Albuquerqueans, one million Salt Lakers, two million Phoenixites, three-quarters of a million Tucsonians, and 12 million Angelenos. It is the 40-story bank towers, the shopping malls, suburbs, highway overpasses, industrial parks, ski resorts; the hundreds of thousands of quality-of-life seekers and the millions of retired-at-fifty-with-too-much-money types whose membership dues give the AARP the clout and ferocity of the Bosnian Serbs.

Washington, D.C., and the American non-West are apparently under a misapprehension: that the salvation of Western federal lands lies in a combination of boom time for the Western cities and bankruptcy for the small indigenous land-based rural economies. In fact, this is a prescription for disaster. In spite of the excesses of the Old West, which even many ranchers—by nature a stubborn and habit-bound breed—concede must be controlled and tempered, it never was and is not now fundamentally incompatible with environmental health and stability. But the New West *is* incompatible: probably it is fatal. Regional environmentalists understand this, unlike the $87,000-a-year boys at EPA headquarters in Washington: Ed Marston, publisher and editor of the environmentalist paper *High Country News* in Paonia, Colorado, recently assured an audience at the University of Wyoming that the subdivision of the West in the 1990's is a far greater threat than the mining of it during the 1970's and 80's was. Though the idea appeals to Deep Ecologists, giving the Rocky Mountains back to the Indians is unfeasible. Perhaps leaving it in the hands of the Westerners who succeeded them is, too. But "environmentalism" as Washington understands it today is only "progress" in another guise, whose intention is to convert an entire region into a playground for the wealthy and an object of consumerist greed for the nation at large. Real environmentalists will stick with 29,000 leaseholders any day. c

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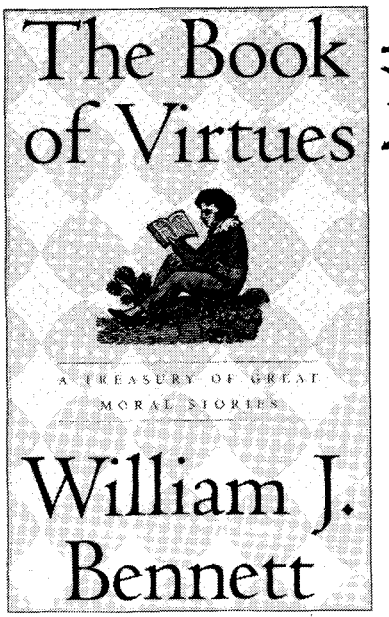

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